

THE ARGOSY.

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THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH.

CHAPTER IV.

AT AVRANCHES.

MRS. CANTER succeeded without much difficulty in persuading Reuben to allow Janet to spend Whitsun-week with her in her new home, and when she hinted that she would like to have her for a longer visit another time he seemed inclined to consent to that also.

A day or two before Janet was to leave home, however, Reuben announced his intention of accompanying her. He had not had a week's holiday for twenty years; he missed Norah, to whom he was much attached; he was anxious to see her new home; and finally he decided to go with his daughter.

This announcement of intentions, which, if carried out, would effectually prevent the proposed marriage from taking place, caused Janet's spirits, already depressed by the thought of the deception she was about to practise on her kind father, to sink to zero. And yet she was in duty bound to appear delighted at the prospect of his company. It was settled they should start early on Saturday afternoon. Janet packed up her own things and her father's the night before, and went off to her work at the mill with a heavy heart on Saturday morning after writing to Rex and Mrs. Canter to tell them the bad news.

Reuben, on the contrary, went to his forge in excellent spirits. He felt he had honestly earned the holiday he intended to take, and he meant to enjoy it. Perhaps, too, he might win some souls, of which he was always in quest to join his communion, and then indeed his holiday would be blessed. In the course of the morning Mark Brown came into the forge to get his master's mowing-machine mended, and, before Reuben had time to tell him of his intended holiday, began to talk about his own spiritual affairs.

"Mr. Foreman, I've been turning over in my mind what you

were saying the other day, and I've decided to become a member of your chapel, if you'll do your best to persuade Miss Janet to be my wife. I call that a fair bargain."

"It isn't a question of bargain, Mark; it is the question of saving your immortal soul. Whether Janet is your wife or another man's won't matter a straw to you when you stand before the Judgment Seat. What will matter then is, whether you are to go straight up to heaven and sing among the angels for ever and ever with that tenor of yours, which will be a deal finer than it is now, or whether you are to go straight down to a fire ten thousand times hotter than any furnace here? That is the question you have to decide. I am not saying I would not as soon have you for a son-in-law, if you were a member, as any other of the brethren, but young people's hearts can't be forced into loving either God or man. Janet must choose for herself. So long as she chooses a good earnest Christian, I don't care who it is," concluded Reuben, as he examined the lawn-mower.

"And that is what I want to become—a good earnest Christian," reiterated Mark.

This was not a true statement. He merely wanted to become Janet's husband, and he thought the surest means of attaining that honour was to join the Baptist Union.

"So I was thinking, if you consider I am fit, Mr. Foreman, I should like to be baptised to-morrow evening," he continued.

He was also thinking there was a large tea-meeting on Whit-Monday, in connection with the chapel, at which he made no doubt Janet would be present, and he knew that, by being baptised on Sunday, he should secure a ticket, and with it, perhaps, a wife.

Now Mark's position as the Rector's servant, and his good voice, made him a very desirable convert; to say nothing of the still greater desirability of rescuing a brand from the burning. Reuben would also add greatly to his own honour and glory if he succeeded in landing this fish, after whom he had long been angling. So, on finding his prey was willing to be landed, he decided to give up his holiday. A new member required a good deal of looking after, and it would not be wise to leave Mark to his own devices for the first week after his baptism.

"The Lord be praised for this," said Reuben, devoutly. "I'll see the minister about it the first thing to-morrow, and if you'll come round to my cottage this evening I'll read and pray with you."

This obliging offer was received by Mark with befitting gratitude, for he fondly imagined Janet would be present during this interesting function. He would have preferred spending the evening in lighter amusement, but the reading would probably afford him opportunities of whispering sweet nothings into Janet's ears, and he could gaze his fill upon her during the prayer; so he left the forge in high glee.

"Janet," said Reuben, when he went home to dinner, "I am very

sorry I shan't be able to go with you, but the Lord has work for me to do here. Mark Brown has decided to be baptised to-morrow. His was a hard heart to win, but it only shows the power of grace to melt the very hardest hearts."

True, Reuben, but the grace that melted Mark's heart was Janet's beauty. If Janet herself suspected this she was careful not to say so; but the revulsion of feeling occasioned by the sudden knowledge that the obstacle was removed which had threatened to mar her happiness, coupled with the strain the excitement she was feeling caused her, was too much for her, and she burst into tears. Reuben, however, attributed it to disappointment at his inability to accompany her, and did his best to comfort her by offering to see her off from the station. Which he did.

Mrs. Canter's new home was about fifty miles from Woodford; a quiet country village named Marling, the scene of Mr. Ryot Tempest's first incumbency. Norah had lived there with the Tempests for ten years, so she was well known in the place, and anticipated no difficulty in obtaining work. Some indeed had been already promised her before she left Woodford, which place reminded her at every turn of her late husband so painfully that she could not make up her mind to remain in it. Some of Canter's relations lived at Marling, and Mrs. Canter had no difficulty in getting them to look after her children on Whit-Monday while she went up to London, ostensibly for a day's outing; in reality, as we know, for Janet's marriage.

It was Norah's first visit to London, and if she pleased herself it would certainly be her last, as she informed the lovers, who, however, were far too much occupied with themselves to pay any attention to her criticisms of the Metropolis. According to Mrs. Canter, who looked at the great city chiefly from a professional point of view, it had not a redeeming feature. The only decent drying ground she saw during her flying visit of a few hours' duration was Hyde Park, and that, Rex informed her, was not available for the purpose. The blacks, she declared, would break any laundress's heart who took a proper pride in her work; while as for washing, it would be a downright waste of time to attempt it in such an atmosphere of fog and smuts; the things would be black before they had time to dry. Her opinion of London did not rise when she saw how the ceremony of marriage was performed there: for Rex, thinking with Rory O'Moore that "there is safety in numbers," had chosen to be married in a church where a whole batch of couples were made happy, or miserable, at the same time.

If that was the proper way to marry people, she, a widow with six children, had never been married; and if she were to mix the quality's shirts and petticoats as the parson and clerk mixed up those couples, her linen would never get back to its rightful owners, and her prestige as an honest laundress would be gone. However, she managed to keep a sharp look-out on Rex and Janet, and was pre-

pared to argue audibly with the parson and knock down the clerk, if they showed any signs of coupling Rex with a strange bride.

On the completion of the ceremony, she declined all offers of sight-seeing out of respect to the late Canter's memory, greatly to the relief of the bride and bridegroom ; and, having seen them depart on their brief honeymoon, she awaited the next train for Marling seated on the platform, her plump hands folded below her portly figure—a silent but severe critic of porters and passengers.

A week after, Janet returned to her father's cottage, and a few days later her young husband sailed for Manitoba.

Rex had expressed a wish that she should not return to her work at the mill, and as there was really no need for her to do so—indeed, Reuben, as we have already stated, had never been anxious for her to work at a factory—Janet gave it up, on the pretext that now her Aunt Norah had left, she would have the washing to do ; and what with making and mending her own clothes, cooking, and cleaning the house, she really had no need to be idle. Nevertheless, she had plenty of spare time in which to fret for Rex, and grieve over her fault in deceiving her father—a fault Reuben would find it very hard to forgive, for he looked upon a lie as the blackest of sins ; and probably Janet would have been happier if she had had her usual regular work.

A few days after Rex sailed the Ryot Tempests left Woodford for Avranches, where for the first week they lived at the hotel, a fairly comfortable one. But Mr. Ryot Tempest soon tired of it. He disliked the hours of the *table-d'hôte* ; the cuisine upset his digestive organs ; moreover he had nothing to do, no marketing, no housekeeping. Consequently his mornings hung heavily on his hands, and he became nervous and fidgety, not to say cross. So that when he announced to his wife and daughter that he had taken a furnished house for the rest of their visit, Mrs. Ryot Tempest was not sorry.

Vera was very indignant. The hotel life suited her exactly. It amused her to see fresh faces every day, even though she had no chance of making acquaintance with anyone ; for she was always placed at the table between her father and mother, Mrs. Tempest holding very French notions as to the amount of liberty to be accorded to girls.

The very first day of their arrival, Vera's attention had been attracted by an English gentleman who that day sat at the top of the table ; but he ordered his place to be changed, so that the next day Vera found he was her *vis-à-vis*, and he listened to her lively conversation with apparently much amusement.

He was a tall, thin man, with the unmistakable air of an English officer about him. He had large dark eyes, which seemingly cost him an effort to open, for he raised them very languidly ; indeed,

his whole air was languid, and he looked as if his chief idea was how exceedingly tiring it was to live. He was evidently of pale complexion, but sunburnt through residence in a foreign climate. He had a long dark moustache, which he stroked caressingly and almost incessantly. He spoke but little and never began a conversation. If addressed he answered courteously, but his manner said plainly he would prefer, if the effort of making a choice were thrown upon him, to be allowed to eat his dinner in peace.

Now one of Vera's accomplishments was mimicry, and the languid air of her vis-à-vis and his slow drawl were irresistible. In a few days she was perfect in both, and, to Mr. Ryot Tempest's horror, came down to dinner the evening he had announced his intention of leaving the hotel, prepared to exhibit her proficiency in the art. She assumed a languid air, the very counterpart of the gentleman's opposite, she raised her eyes just as he did, and, instead of rattling on in French and English as she usually did to her father and mother, drawled out her answers to their attempts at conversation in so exact an imitation of her opposite neighbour that no one who was listening could fail to recognise the person she was mimicking. In vain did Mr. Ryot Tempest fidget and frown and in impatient undertones reprove her for her rudeness; in vain did Mrs. Tempest expostulate with her in rapid French. Vera was deaf to both, and kept up the part she was playing through six courses. Her victim ignored her conduct utterly; he was as calm and as languid and as little inclined for conversation as ever; not the faintest sign betrayed he was conscious of the amusement Vera was causing at his expense. Only when she rose from the table, one flash from those dark eyes, a flash that had no languor about it, told her he had observed her, had writhed under her conduct, had done nothing to provoke it, had difficulty in forgiving it.

"What do you mean, Vera, by making such an exhibition of yourself?" demanded Mr. Ryot Tempest irritably, as soon as they reached their own sitting-room.

"I don't know, papa. I wanted to have some fun before we left the hotel. It will be dull enough after to-morrow, we three shut up in a large house just as we are at home."

"Fun, indeed! Your conduct was most unladylike, and positively insulting to Captain Raleigh. For that, I understand, is the gentleman's name, and a very good name it is, too. My only surprise is that he did not leave the table. I really think I ought to call upon him and apologise for your conduct."

"I will go myself, if you like. What fun it would be!" said Vera, glancing at herself in the glass to see if her hair was in order for the visit she proposed making.

"Certainly not. Perhaps I may have an opportunity of saying something suitable before we leave the hotel. I know a little of his family, and if, as I conjecture, he is one of the Raleighs, they

are distantly connected with the Ryots; so no doubt, under the circumstances, the matter could be easily adjusted."

But the next day Captain Raleigh did not appear in the *salle-à-manger*; and the day after, the Ryot Tempests moved into the house Mr. Tempest had hired in the *Boulevard du Sud*.

Mr. Ryot Tempest's mornings were now fully occupied. As soon as breakfast was over he sallied forth, accompanied by Vera and followed by a French servant carrying a basket to the town, where he spent a good hour in doing his marketing for the day. He then went to the club and read the papers; then returned home and occupied the rest of the morning until luncheon in planning some drive or excursion for the afternoon. On Saturday his domestic duties were increased, for it was market day; so he went to market first, to lay in a stock of poultry and butter for the week, after the fashion of the place.

They left the hotel on a Wednesday, and on the following Saturday Vera and her father went to market. They had seen nothing of Captain Raleigh since that night at dinner, and Vera, though she would not have confessed it, was secretly regretting her rudeness to him as she followed her father down the street in which the butter market was held. Here, ranged in two long lines, stood the butter-women, all in caps of different shapes, all holding baskets of butter wrapped in cloths, all talking volubly, and entreating the passers-by to taste their butter. This Mr. Ryot Tempest proceeded to do so often with a little wooden spoon he carried for the purpose, that Vera felt sure he would be laid up with a bilious attack the next day.

At last he decided on some butter and moved to the weighing place to have it duly weighed before it was transferred to Marie's basket. While he was thus engaged Vera was dreaming of a certain tall, thin man with a languid manner, and wondering why she felt so much interest in him, and if she would ever see him again. Just as the butter transaction was concluded, this question was settled by the appearance of Captain Raleigh at the opposite end of the lane of butter-women. He was sauntering languidly along, carrying a large white umbrella to protect himself from the sun, which was very hot.

"How effeminate! I suppose he is afraid of his complexion," thought Vera, immediately closing her own parasol of lace and ribbons, which was certainly more ornamental than useful, to set the object of her censure a good example.

Mr. Ryot Tempest now moved on to the poultry market, where for the next twenty minutes he was occupied in weighing by their feet various couples of live ducks and chickens tied up for sale. When satisfied with the weight of a couple, he proceeded to examine their combs and to feel their breasts. Then ensued a lively debate as to their age and price, which always ended in Mr. Tempest moving on to another stall and going through the same process there.

This interesting pastime had been going on for nearly half-an hour, when Vera, who was thoroughly sick of it, and was longing to walk about the market and look at the people, not at the wares, was startled by a cry of "Mad dog," accompanied by various shouts and screams.

The cries came from a narrow street at right angles with the square in which the poultry market was held; and a few paces from Vera, at the bottom of this street, stood a small child who could just manage to walk alone, and was now absorbed in sucking a fig some charitable person had bestowed upon it. If the dog were not arrested before it reached this corner, the child, who stood straight in its course all unconscious of the danger menacing him, would in all probability be a victim to it.

Vera saw this, and without a moment's hesitation she dashed forward to draw the boy into a place of safety. But she was too late; she and the dog, a vicious-looking brute, reached the boy at the same moment. Vera seized the child with one hand, and with the other brandished her parasol to ward off the attack of the dog, when suddenly a blow on the head from the handle of a white umbrella stunned the brute, and before it had time to recover, it was despatched by the men who were pursuing it. The same stroke that felled the dog broke Vera's frail sunshade into two pieces, but she was too much engaged in quieting the now sobbing child and in escaping with it from the crowd that had collected to think of her parasol.

Not so Captain Raleigh. Having inadvertently smashed it when he rushed forward to rescue Vera, he now mingled with the crowd and picked up the pieces as nimbly as Vera herself could have done, and then advancing to her with his most languid air, he presented the broken parasol with a long-drawn-out apology.

"I am very sorry to have broken your pretty parasol, Miss Tempest; it was very awkward of me. I trust you are not hurt." And, without waiting for an answer, Captain Raleigh opened his white umbrella and sauntered off with the air of a man who had never been in a hurry or exerted himself in his life.

"Vera, Vera! where are you? What is all this commotion? Why do you leave my side? What are you doing?" exclaimed Mr. Ryot Tempest, bustling up to Vera, very much pleased with himself for having succeeded in getting a couple of ducks for fifty centimes less than he was originally asked for them.

"I am doing nothing," said Vera. "Captain Raleigh has just killed a mad dog which in another moment would have bitten me, and I am thinking I didn't deserve it of him."

"A mad dog! You know my horror of hydrophobia, Vera. Dear me, dear me! I hope it has not touched you. Are you quite sure it didn't? A mere scratch might produce rabies, you know."

"It didn't touch me or the child; but I can't do any more

marketing to-day, papa. I must go home, please ; my parasol is broken," said Vera. And Mr. Tempest, seeing she was pale, took her home at once ; but he failed to get a satisfactory account of what had happened from her. All she was inclined to talk of was her broken parasol, and Captain Raleigh's stupidity in breaking it.

"You are very unreasonable, Vera. I understood you to say Captain Raleigh had rescued you from the mad dog," said Mr. Tempest.

"So he did ; but he broke my parasol ; and he might have lent me his umbrella. I am dreadfully hot. I daresay I shall have a sunstroke ; and it will be all his fault, stupid man," said Vera, pouting.

"A sunstroke, my dear Vera ? I hope not. You are quite sure the dog did not touch you ? You must keep quiet for the rest of the day, and I will go this afternoon and call on Captain Raleigh and thank him for his gallant behaviour."

This was precisely what Vera wanted. She wished to be left to herself, or at least to her mother, to think over the events of the morning, of which she had only a confused idea. She could still see in her mind's eye the dreadful dog about to spring on her, and a tall, slim figure, which seemed the incarnation of strength and energy, interposing and stunning the mad, hunted creature with a white umbrella, and the glimpse she had caught of a pale face with flashing eyes and tightly-closed lips haunted her alternately with a picture of the languid man who for a week sat opposite her at the table d'hôte. She also wished with all her heart to become acquainted with this man, who interested her more than anyone she had ever met ; but, had she shown the least anxiety to do so, Mr. Ryot Tempest would have thrown every obstacle in the way, even though Captain Raleigh was, if one of *the* Raleighs, a connection of the Ryots.

That afternoon Captain Raleigh received a visit from Mr. Ryot Tempest. He was lying on the sofa in his private room in the hotel when his guest was announced, and did not catch the name ; but he knew the dapper little man before him was Vera's father.

"Mr. Tempest, I believe," said Captain Raleigh, rising.

"Ryot, if you please," corrected Mr. Tempest, with a smile.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Ryot."

"Tempest, if you please," again corrected Mr. Ryot Tempest, with a second smile.

What on earth is the fellow's name ? wondered Captain Raleigh, as he stroked his moustache in despair.

"Ryot Tempest," explained the owner of this name.

"Thanks. Pray be seated, Mr. Ryot Tempest. I am delighted to see you," said Captain Raleigh.

Mr. Ryot Tempest seated himself, and spent the next quarter of an hour in endeavouring to prove to his host the connection between the Ryots and the Raleighs. Having settled this to his own satis-

faction, he proceeded to the object of his visit—to thank Captain Raleigh for killing the mad dog, and to gain an exact account of what had taken place. But in this he failed; for all he could get out of Captain Raleigh was admiration of Vera's conduct in trying to save the child, and blame of his own stupidity in breaking her parasol, till Mr. Ryot Tempest inwardly cursed the parasol, and regretted that his cloth did not allow him to do so aloud.

We have said before that Mr. Ryot Tempest possessed the feminine vice of curiosity, and as he was intensely anxious to know all about Captain Raleigh, it is perhaps unnecessary to add that he did not rise to leave until he had gratified his curiosity. When he did go, he had discovered the following facts with regard to him:—

Captain Raleigh was one of *the* Raleighs. He was an only son; his father was dead, his mother lived in Norfolk, and he was returning there the next day; he was now home from India on sick-leave, having had a sunstroke; he had been making a little tour in Normandy, but his state of health prevented him from doing much, and he ought to have gone home a week ago, had he felt equal to the journey. He did not add that interest in Vera had induced him to prolong his stay to the last day; but this was the truth. Neither did he volunteer the information that he was of the same religion as Mrs. Ryot Tempest. Had he done so, he would not have been invited to Woodford if he were ever in that part of England, which invitation Mr. Ryot Tempest gave him before he took his leave.

The next morning a lovely bouquet of hothouse flowers was brought to Vera with Captain Raleigh's compliments, and on the back of his card, which was tied to the flowers, was written "Au revoir."

An hour later Captain Raleigh left Avranches, but he left his heart behind him.

CHAPTER V.

"OH! THAT THOSE LIPS HAD LANGUAGE!"

WE left Mark Brown on Whitsun-eve in a very devotional frame of mind, contemplating baptism by immersion the next day, and anticipating great pleasure from the tea-meeting on Monday, when he, being the hero of the hour, would doubtless receive much attention and flattery from the Baptist connection, and would, he trusted, thus have a favourable opportunity for declaring his passion for Janet to that young woman. Consequently, he returned to his Saturday's work in excellent spirits. To say that the thought of Janet left but little room for meditation on his spiritual affairs, notwithstanding his profession of penitence to Reuben, is only to say that Mark was human; and as he cleaned the carriage and stable, the thought of Janet's perfections rather than his own sins occupied his mind.

But Janet was still to be won, and Mark was well aware that unless he had Reuben openly on his side, his own powers of attraction were not sufficient to win her heart. So, being very practical, he thought himself of a method of ingratiating himself in the blacksmith's favour.

One of Mark's accomplishments in his own opinion was writing verses ; in fact, he secretly thought Providence had meant him for a poet, whilst circumstance, that most unspiritual god, had made him a groom and gardener. As a rule, his poetry was of an amorous nature, and assumed the lyric form ; but as Mark fetched his scythe to mow the lawn for Sunday, in the absence of the lawn mower, he decided to aspire higher. He would write a hymn, and take it with him that evening when he went for the spiritual instruction Reuben had promised him. He could hardly give a more graceful proof of the sincerity of his feelings.

It was a hot day, the air was filled with subdued sounds, and the rhythmical swish of Mark's scythe, the hum of insects, and the low warbling of the birds in the shrubbery were conducive to a poetic frame of mind ; so that when he finished mowing he retired to the harness-room, and before beginning the prosaic work of cleaning the harness, he produced writing materials, and delivered his soul of some verses, modelled on a hymn he had heard Reuben singing.

This production, instinct with piety, savouring, as it did, in the two first verses of Reuben's trade, and in the third of Mark's recent occupation, was written in blue ink on pink paper, and carefully placed in the pocket of his second-best coat until the evening, the author having every confidence that so spiritual and devout a composition would gain him a father-in-law if not a wife ; though, indeed, if Janet, when she heard it, could refuse to wed the talented writer, she must be harder-hearted than Mark could believe, and would do well to add the hymn to her daily prayers.

That evening was a turning-point in the life of Mark Brown, though he did not recognise it at the time. His anger when he found Janet had gone away for a week was none the less deep that he was obliged to conceal it, and he inwardly abused Reuben for allowing her to go as he pretended to listen to his instructions. He was enraged with himself too for having consented to join the Baptists. But he had gone too far to retract ; he must submit to being baptised the next day, and he must keep up his hypocritical profession of piety, or lose all hope of Janet. So he decided to commit the sin of sacrilege ; and the next day, with his heart full of anger and hypocrisy, he was baptised "in the same baptism as John Tanner," another convert : and from that hour his course was a downward one.

When Janet returned from her brief honeymoon, she found, to her distress, she would not be able to avoid Mark as much as she had hitherto done, for his connection with Reuben gave him excuses for dropping in constantly in the evening. To her further annoyance

her father sometimes left them alone, and Mark always seized the opportunity to press his suit.

"Janet," he said, regardless of grammar, on one of these occasions: "I have got something since you went away—something very precious.—I have got religion!"

"I am very glad to hear it, Mark."

"And salvation, Janet," continued Mark, his face glowing with a passion which was scarcely religious in its nature, in spite of the prize he had won.

"I hope you are happy," said Janet sadly; "for I suppose if we have certainly gained salvation, we have gained more than the whole world can give."

"Happy! No, I am not. I want something better than religion and more precious to me than salvation. I want you, Janet, and I shall never know what happiness means till I have you."

"I wish you would not talk so, Mark," said Janet uneasily, glancing at the tall grandfather's clock which stood in the corner, and wondering when Reuben, who had gone to fetch some milk for supper, would return. She was sitting working by the light of a cheap lamp, which stood on the kitchen table. At the opposite corner of it sat Mark glaring at her, his ugly face propped up by his left hand, the elbow of which rested on his knee. His right arm was stretched across the table, and he brought it down with a bang as he answered Janet's last remark.

"Why should not I talk so? This is a free country, and surely if a man loves a girl, he is free to tell her so?"

"Mind the lamp, Mark," said Janet, for his violent action shook the gimcrack little lamp.

"What do I care for the lamp? What do I care for anything in this world but you? It is you I long for; you I dream of night and day; you I live for; you I will have in spite of your pride," exclaimed Mark, working himself into a fury.

"I am not proud," said Janet.

"Then do as I want you; be my wife, and let us have done with this shilly-shallying. Will you, Janet?" And, as he spoke, he rose and tried to put his arm round Janet's waist; but she shrank from him as if he were a leper, rising hastily from her chair and moving towards the door.

Mark stretched across the table to stop her, and in so doing, accidentally or not will never be known, knocked over the lamp, which broke, the oil caught fire, and the flames barred Janet's progress and drove her screaming back towards Mark.

What action he would have taken next cannot be recorded, for just then the door opened, and Reuben entered. Quick as thought he emptied the contents of his milk-can upon the flames, and tearing off his thick pea-jacket, threw it over the burning oil and finally trod out the fire. It all happened so quickly, that on looking back upon

it afterwards, it seemed to Janet like a terrible dream, in which she was driven to choose between death by fire or life with Mark ; and, dear as life was to her in the prime of her youth and beauty, one seemed, under these circumstances, as terrible as the other.

When Reuben had extinguished the fire and turned his own bull's-eye on the scene, he found Janet sobbing hysterically in the chimney-corner, and Mark with a sheepish air looking sulkily at her. He never succeeded in getting a clear account of what had passed between them, but from that day Janet was never annoyed by any more visits from Mark Brown, and she rightly gave her father the credit of having put an end to them.

This was not all gain to Janet, for Mark was determined to marry her. He had not joined the Baptists for nothing ; he would not be made a fool of in this way ; so he took to dogging her footsteps and waylaying her whenever she went out—his master's absence from home, gave him plenty of leisure time. And on this account, and also because Janet knew Vera would be a friend to her, she longed for the return of the Tempests.

Meanwhile Vera was tasting the first real sorrow of her life at Avranches. There the Ryot Tempests were in daily intercourse with a Father Ambrose, curé of one of the churches, and an old and valued friend. He was a Frenchman, but had spent much of his life in England, and spoke English remarkably well. At this time he was about sixty years old ; a tall, thin, ascetic-looking man with a refined face, and a kind, fatherly manner. He was on very intimate terms with the Tempests, and had known Vera from her birth. Indeed, he it was who married her father and mother, and ever since that marriage they had met once a year. If the Ryot Tempests did not go to Avranches, Father Ambrose came to Woodford and stayed at the convent. He got on exceedingly well with Mr. Tempest, and was very proud of Vera and her mother.

One day, soon after Captain Raleigh's departure, these four made an excursion to some ruins, and Vera, who had been dreaming all day of Captain Raleigh, afterwards looked back upon that day as one of the happiest of her life. It was not till they returned home that the cloud arose which was to cast a dark shadow over it.

On their arrival Mrs. Ryot Tempest was taken ill. At first her illness appeared to be only a bilious attack, and as she was often ill, neither Vera nor her father was alarmed. But on the third day, the doctor who had been called in told Mr. Tempest that it was no bilious attack ; the heart was the cause of the illness. Though his wife might rally and live for some years, she was in danger, and whilst this crisis lasted might go off at a moment's notice.

Father Ambrose was at once sent for, and undertook to break to the patient the state she was in. But he found she was quite aware of her danger, and resigned to it, though for Vera's sake she would

have wished to have been spared a few years longer, at least till she was married; for she dreaded leaving her sweet but wilful little daughter, knowing as she did how little sympathy there was between Vera and her father. Now that Rex, to whom Vera was devoted, was gone so far away and her mother was about to depart to a still more distant land—the land that is very far off—the child would be sadly lonely.

After her interview with Father Ambrose, Mrs. Tempest sent for Vera, who was still ignorant of her mother's dangerous state. Indeed, the girl, on whose young life the light of love had just broken, was inclined to look at everything through rose-coloured glasses, and so had been less anxious about her mother than she would have been at another time. She was therefore almost stunned when her pretty, gentle mother told her she believed her hours were numbered and her end very near. Vera could not believe it, still less could she realise it, as Mrs. Tempest saw.

"It is true, Vera, darling; and before I go I want to tell you what I feel I ought to have told you long ago; but I yielded to your father's wishes, feeling they were but natural. You were baptised by Father Ambrose, Vera——"

"I, mamma!" interrupted Vera.

"Yes, dearest. Both you and Rex, by your father's consent, though he stipulated that you should be brought up in his faith until you were twenty-one, and then you were to be allowed to choose for yourselves to which faith you would belong. Till then I was not to influence you except by my prayers, and I am afraid, I can truly say, I have kept my promise only too well. But now that I am on the verge of the grave——"

"Don't, mamma!" pleaded Vera in her distress.

"My dear, we must bravely face the truth," gently returned her mother. "Now that I am about to leave you, I see things from a very different point of view, and I implore you, Vera, when you are of age to embrace the faith you were baptised into. Do not rest till you have satisfied yourself that it is right for you to do this, and get Father Ambrose, whom your father respects and likes, to help you. Tell Rex what I have told you, for though he is twenty-three he is still ignorant of it, and deeply do I regret that I let him go abroad without telling him. And pray, my darling, that your mother may be forgiven for having loved her husband more than the souls of her children."

Vera heard, but her mind was so full of the thought that her darling mother was dying that she scarcely took in the rest at the time. Religion was not a subject that interested her; she seldom gave it a thought. It seemed quite natural to her that her mother, who was French, was also a Catholic, and that her father being English should be consequently a Protestant. She now learnt that she was a Catholic by baptism, but the inconsistent conduct of her

parents in baptising her in one faith, and bringing her up in the other did not strike her at the time. Her mother's state was the only thing that appeared of the least consequence to her. Even the thought of Captain Raleigh was excluded by the fear lest her mother should be taken from her.

From that time Vera scarcely left her mother's side, and after the above conversation Mrs. Tempest grew rapidly worse. It had stirred her soul to its depths and increased the heart-mischief. The very next day she breathed her last, gently, and without a struggle, in the presence of her husband, Vera and Father Ambrose, who administered the last sacraments of his Church.

When all was over it was Father Ambrose who led Vera from the room where, in the sacred presence of death, her passionate grief seemed out of place. The contrast between the peaceful calmness of the sleeping mother, who looked scarcely older than her daughter as she lay with her beautiful wavy brown hair all loose, and the sobbing girl, wild with grief as she was, was as great as the difference between peace and war. One had fought the battle of life, and, as Father Ambrose devoutly hoped, won the victory; the other had just entered into the thick of the fight, and who could say what the issue of the battle would be?

It was lucky for Vera that Father Ambrose was there, for Mr Ryot Tempest was too much absorbed in his own grief, and in making the necessary arrangements for the funeral, to look after her. But it was clear to the kind old priest, well versed as he was in human suffering, that she was in no fit state to be left. So he stayed with her till the nuns he had sent for had performed the last sad offices for the dead mother, and then he handed Vera over to them, that they might take charge of her till she was well enough to endure solitude; and for the next day or two, until after the funeral, the nuns took it in turns to watch by the dead mother and the sorrowing daughter.

It was arranged that Vera and her father should leave Avranches for home the day after the funeral, the doctor insisting that Vera should at once be taken away from the scene of her mother's death. Father Ambrose, who had proved himself an invaluable friend, and had taken much trouble off Mr. Ryot Tempest's hands, saw them off, and for a long time was haunted by Vera's sad, beautiful face, crowned with her golden hair, and the great dark eyes, lovelier than ever now grief had washed them, which were lifted up to his as she bade him an affectionate good-bye, and begged him to write to her. Then the slight, graceful figure in its deep mourning sank back in the railway carriage, and in a few minutes was on its way home.

CHAPTER VI.

MARK'S FOLLY.

THE Ryot Tempests travelled by easy stages, for neither father nor daughter was anxious to reach that now desolate home. Yet when at last they drove up to the Rectory gates, Vera felt a thrill of gladness, and for the first time since her mother's death, realised that there was still something left to live for. The garden was brilliant with geraniums and calceolarias, the sun was shining brilliantly in an almost cloudless sky, so that all nature seemed to be smiling on her, and she almost felt as if she were waking from some dreadful dream as the carriage stopped at the door. There a pleasant surprise greeted her in the person of Norah Canter, who stood on the steps and clasped the motherless girl in her motherly arms, and almost carried the now sobbing Vera into the house.

"Yes, Mr. Tempest," said Mrs. Canter presently, "I knew Miss Vera would want me, so I made so bold as to come over yesterday, and got my niece, Janet, to go and look after the children and the washing for a week, while I take care of this poor motherless child. The clothes will suffer, I know, sir, especially the starched things; but there, when a human heart is breaking you can't be thinking of flired petticoats and fine shirts."

And so for the next week Mrs. Canter did her best to fill up the gap Mrs. Tempest's death had made, and was useful to Vera in many ways. She was an excellent listener, and was deeply interested in hearing all the details of Mrs. Tempest's illness and death; details which it did Vera good to pour out. And when Vera confided to her the new interest Captain Raleigh's acquaintance had brought into her life, she knew how to turn the conversation on him when the girl was plunged in grief for her mother.

And when, the day before she left, Vera showed her a letter she had received that morning from Captain Raleigh, in which he begged to offer her his sincere sympathy in her great sorrow, and hoped to have the pleasure of paying a visit to Woodford in the autumn, Mrs. Canter went home comforted about her, seeing that the new interest in her life was an all-absorbing one, and that Vera, though stunned at first by grief, was rallying from the blow she had received. Vera also communicated to Norah what Mrs. Tempest had told her on her death-bed, and received the benefit of Mrs. Canter's theological views in return.

"If I were you, Miss Vera, I should not decide anything till I was going to be married, and then I should be whatever my husband was. I don't hold with mixed marriages myself. Married folk must have their differences, of course, but there is one point they ought to think alike upon, and that is religion; as I told poor Canter. So, though he was born and bred a Methodist, when I married him, I took him to

church regularly twice every Sunday with me, because I do think a wife ought to be of the same religion as her husband. I don't hold with chapel-folk any more than I do with Catholics ; one believes too little and the other too much for me ; so I go to church, where you can believe as much or as little as you like. Talking of believing, would you believe me, Miss Vera, I have had to change my washing-day since I left Woodford from Monday to Tuesday ?”

“No, indeed, Norah ; I thought washing-day was as immovable a festival as Christmas-day. But why ?”

“Because, Miss Vera, though there is a mighty lot of fools in the world, there is more at Marling than in most places. Folks there will have their clean linen sent home on Friday nights, which is reasonable enough, but they won't let me have their dirty linen till Monday. So I have to waste half Monday sending about for clothes ; double trouble, double expense, and nothing gained ; only a day lost, and all because it is the custom in London and most towns, where they know no more about washing than I do about dancing. However, I have raised my prices in consequence, and if I could but get Reuben to let me have Janet this winter, I might save a little money.”

Truth to tell, Mrs. Canter was more anxious about Janet than about Vera now, for she went back to Marling without having succeeded in getting a promise from her brother that he would spare Janet for the winter : though he allowed it was advisable to get the girl away from Mark's persecution.

“Vera,” said Mr. Ryot Tempest, one day about two months after his wife's death, “I think we should pay a visit of condolence to Mrs. Jamieson this afternoon.”

“She hasn't sent out ‘return thanks’ cards yet,” objected Vera, who had no great liking for the lady in question.

“True ; but ours will be a friendly visit, not a mere formal call. Our own sorrow should teach us to ‘weep with those who weep,’ or we lose one of the great lessons it is intended to teach us.”

“I don't think we are likely to find Mrs. Jamieson weeping ; it would make her nose and eyes red. Moreover, I should not think she has much to weep for. The death of that cross, gouty old husband, whom she considered the only drawback to her marriage, must be rather a subject of congratulation than of condolence.”

“Vera, I regret to hear a young girl of your age giving vent to cynicism worthy of Diogenes. It is most unbecoming.”

“I am very sorry ; I didn't mean to be cynical, papa. I will go with you, if you wish it.”

“Yes, my dear, I do wish it. We will start at three, if you please, and Mark must go with us to hold the pony.”

Vera knew well enough Mark was taken for the sake of appearances, for Mrs. Jamieson was a woman of some position and a leading member of the local society. She had just lost her husband, who died a month after Mrs. Ryot Tempest, and was consequently

obliged to retire for a while from the garden-parties and other social gatherings she was wont to grace with her presence ; and whether or no Vera was right in her estimation of the grief the loss of her husband brought, Mrs. Jamieson's forced abstinence from society was a real trial to her.

She was a tall, fine, handsome woman, inclining to coarseness as she drew near to her fortieth year, with dark hair and eyes and a rather high colour. She was exceedingly well preserved, and when she chose—and she generally did choose—could be an extremely fascinating woman : always saying the right thing in the right place ; clever without being in the least intellectual ; a thorough woman of the world, aiming at popularity, and, as she was rich and agreeable, securing it. Her married life had not been a happy one ; but she had married solely for money, so she made the best of it, hoping secretly for better times, when she would not be burdened with an old and gouty husband.

She lived in a charming house with delightful grounds, about four miles from the Ryot Tempests, with whom she was on friendly though not intimate, terms, though she greeted Vera as if she had been her greatest friend on this occasion.

She looked very well in her widow's mourning, which became her exceedingly, toning down as it did her appearance of somewhat exuberant health, and lending an air of interest to what had hitherto been a very common-place existence. She had too much good taste to allude to her visitors' sorrow, but dwelt largely upon her own loss, in which trial Mr. Ryot Tempest professed deep sympathy, and probably felt it. Vera neither felt nor expressed any sympathy, nor did she for one moment believe Mrs. Jamieson felt a spark of real sorrow for her husband's death. The visit was not a long one, for Vera, not seeing her way to declining the overtures of friendship Mrs. Jamieson was making without being rude, and not having the faintest intention of responding to them, rose to go at the earliest opportunity.

"I had no idea she was so handsome," said Mr. Ryot Tempest as they drove home.

"I suppose she is a gentleman's beauty. I thought her too stout," said Vera.

"A very fine figure, my dear Vera, a very fine figure," said Mr. Tempest, who, like most little men, admired big women. "And a most charming woman," he added.

"Yes, she is very charming, but she is an arrant humbug," said Vera, whipping the pony.

"Be careful, my dear, please ; the pony won't bear the whip. And I really wish you would endeavour to check that critical spirit ; such harsh judgments are most uncharitable."

"It may be uncharitable, but I am sure it is true, and truth and charity are not always easy to reconcile with each other. I don't

like Mrs. Jamieson, papa ; I never did ; so let us talk of something else," concluded Vera, secretly rather ashamed of her remarks on Mrs. Jamieson, for whom she was feeling an unaccountable aversion.

Perhaps it was because of Vera's acknowledged dislike for Mrs. Jamieson that Mr. Ryot Tempest paid his next visit to her about a fortnight later alone. And perhaps he was right when he told himself he wished this second visit to be of a pastoral nature, although as Mrs. Jamieson did not live in his parish it was rather a work of supererogation on his part.

On this occasion he made two discoveries with regard to Mrs. Jamieson. He discovered, in the first place, that she was of a very sympathetic nature ; and in the next that she was a woman of excellent judgment, who had evidently formed a most correct and high opinion of his ability and worth. He did not discover that she was fully aware of the value of flattery, and knew to a nicety how much every man she came across would swallow. As a rule, the amount was large, and Mr. Ryot Tempest was by no means an exception to the rule. She had the tact to see that any open allusion to his wife's death would be impolitic at this stage of their acquaintance, for it was clear his love and his grief were very real ; but this did not deter her from offering deep sympathy with the loneliness and strangeness of his present position, which she understood by sad experience so well. And when she delicately hinted that his sweet daughter was probably too young to enter into his desolate feelings, Mr. Ryot Tempest responded by confiding to her how little he and Vera had in common.

"Ah, yes, Mr. Ryot Tempest, I can so well understand how inadequate the immature mind of a young girl like Vera must be to enter into the thoughts and interests of a learned man and a classical scholar like yourself. There must of necessity be a gulf between you it will take years, almost a small lifetime, to bridge over. A woman's mind seldom matures much under forty, so I can quite feel it must be as impossible for your daughter to be a real companion to you as it is for you to take much interest in the tennis and other frivolities which make up the lives of girls."

Mr. Ryot Tempest moved a little uneasily in his chair ; for Vera was not a frivolous girl by any means ; and, as he knew, was quite qualified to enter into all his studies if she had thought them worth pursuing.

"Vera is not exactly frivolous ; she reads more than most girls of her age, and she is accomplished ; but our minds seem to be cast in different moulds. Or perhaps, as you say, it is that her mind is still unformed," he replied.

"I am sure it is that. The truth is, Mr. Tempest, as you and I are discovering, it is only a woman ripe in judgment who can really satisfy a man's natural desire for intellectual sympathy ; and it is only the cultivated mind of a man who can respond to a woman's longing

for mental stimulants. Alas! for us both, it has pleased God to deprive us of these things; but He has 'tempered the wind to the shorn lamb,' and left us the inestimable boon of friendship."

And here Mrs. Jamieson made a feint of drying her fine eyes with a deep black-bordered handkerchief. She didn't explain who was the lamb to whom the wind had been tempered. Whether she or Mr. Ryot Tempest, or both, represented that much-quoted animal was left for him to decide. But though her simile might have been far-fetched, she was conscious that her last speech had been a telling one; for when Mr. Tempest took his leave, he pressed her hand in both of his in the most friendly, not to say affectionate, fashion.

"Come and see me again soon; you have done me so much good. I was feeling very sad when you arrived, and I shall look forward anxiously to another talk."

These were her parting words, to which Mr. Ryot Tempest warmly responded.

A fortnight later Mr. Ryot Tempest paid another visit to Mrs. Jamieson, during which it transpired that she would always be at home to him on Saturday afternoons: and from that time it became a habit with him to ride over and spend an hour or two every Saturday afternoon with this handsome widow. He never asked Vera to accompany him, nor did he think it necessary to tell her where he went; and not being curious or suspicious, it never occurred to her to inquire.

Indeed, as the autumn advanced, Vera's mind was much occupied in anticipating Captain Raleigh's promised visit; added to which she was much interested in Janet, of whose trouble with regard to Mark Brown she had been accidentally made aware. Mark had never been a favourite of Vera's, and when they returned from Avranches, it struck her that he was by no means improved. The other servants complained to her that his temper, never good, was now almost unbearable; and he had grown so slovenly in his work and appearance that at last Vera called her father's attention to it.

Now, in Mr. Tempest's eyes, Mark was a paragon of perfection, who could hardly do wrong, so the result of Vera's complaint was to bring on a fit of domestic energy called by the servants "the fidgets," to which Mr. Ryot Tempest was periodically liable. On these occasions he ransacked the house from attic to basement to the distraction of the women-servants; instituting a general sweeping and dusting and burning of rubbish, and having no visible effect beyond making everyone in the house from himself downwards cross and uncomfortable.

On the present occasion he was so far impressed with the reasonableness of Vera's complaint that, having inaugurated a house-cleaning at home, he set Mark to turn out a loft over the coach-house, in which all kinds of rubbish had been thrown, and to ensure its being done thoroughly, he superintended it himself.

Among the odds and ends, Mark came across an old horse-pistol, which, as soon as his master had finally departed, he took down to the harness-room to examine and clean, for it was very rusty. Mark, however, soon polished it up, and to his delight found it was all right. Clumsy as it was, it would have been sufficient to kill a better man than Mark. He had, however, at present no murderous designs in view; he merely wanted to intimidate Janet into marrying him with it; and, if the sight of it was insufficient, to fire a cap and a little powder, which would, he hoped, be more effective eloquence than his most impassioned language had hitherto proved.

This happened in October, and a few days later Mr. Tempest and Vera being out, Mark put the pistol in his pocket, and strolled up the lane towards Reuben's cottage, meaning to waylay Janet, whom he had seen go down to the village earlier in the afternoon, and who would, he knew, return in time to have the blacksmith's tea ready for him when he came up from the forge. As he expected, just as it was beginning to get dusk Janet returned, and was by no means pleased when Mark, who was lurking behind a low fence, advanced and accosted her. It was only a narrow lane, a mere bridle-path, and Janet found she could not get on any further, unless Mark chose to let her; which he was not inclined to do, until he had had his say at any rate.

"You needn't be in such a hurry, Janet. I have not seen you to speak to for I don't know how long, and as you know well enough I have plenty to say."

"I can't stop now, Mark. Father will be home before I have got his tea ready."

"He won't be home for another hour," said Mark coolly. "And now look here, Janet; once for all I want you to give me your answer. I love you madly, and you know it. You couldn't find a better husband than me if you were to go to New York for him, and you know that, too. Now, Janet, there is nothing you could ask me for that I would not give you if you'll only have me. Once more I ask you—and mind it is for the last time, Janet—will you marry me?"

"No, Mark, I can't. I have given you my answer over and over again," replied Janet.

"Yes, but that isn't the answer I mean to have. I mean you to say yes. Marry you, I will."

"Mark, it is impossible. Don't keep me here any longer, please. I am very sorry, but I don't love you, and I never could," said Janet, hoping to kill all latent hope in Mark's bosom, especially since he had told her it was the last time he should ask her.

"Very well, Janet; you see this pistol; I'll give you till I have counted forty—and if you don't say yes by then, I blow my brains out before your eyes. One—two," and as he spoke, Mark produced the horse-pistol.

Janet was really dreadfully alarmed, but she had plenty of nerve

and self-control, so she answered in a firm voice, though she turned a shade paler.

"Don't be a fool, Mark. If you think to frighten me, you are mistaken ; I don't believe the pistol is loaded."

"Twenty-one—twenty-two," continued Mark doggedly, not deigning to answer her remark.

Janet looked to see if she could get past him, but unless she turned round and went down the hill, she could not escape without a struggle. At that moment, to her delight, she heard a horse's hoofs coming up the narrow lane, and as few people rode in this path except Vera and Mr. Tempest she rightly guessed it to be one of them. It was indeed Vera returning from a ride. Mr. Tempest had gone on the pony to see Mrs. Jamieson, so she could not have taken Mark had she wished as they had only two horses—the pony Mr. Tempest rode and drove, and Vera's own little thoroughbred. But she rarely took Mark when out riding, as she disliked him. Moreover, she was a first-rate rider, had no fear of tramps, and cared nothing for conventionalities.

"Here comes your master or Miss Vera ; pray have done with this foolery, Mark," said Janet.

"Thirty-eight—thirty-nine—forty," continued Mark, and at the word forty he pointed the pistol towards his own red head and fired, giving Janet a reproachful leer before he pulled the trigger.

Simultaneously with the report of the pistol, Mark fell down into the fence apparently a dead man, and Janet, horrified, gave a loud cry for help and caught hold of the stone wall on the opposite side of the lane to support herself, for her knees sank under her, and it was only by a great effort she prevented herself from fainting.

It was at this critical juncture that Vera appeared upon the scene.

(To be continued.)



In Memoriam.

FEBRUARY 10, 1887.

How shall we mourn thee, gifted one,
 How best extol thy deathless fame?
 Who, like the glorious setting sun,
 A golden halo round thy name,
 Sank into rest :
 In brighter worlds to rise again
 Crowned with the blest.

How few among the author train
 Can writings show as pure as thine ;
 The chaste creations of thy brain
 As fair untrodden snow will shine
 Years hence, as now :
 Immortal, as the wreath we twine
 Around thy brow.

A thousand lives owe thee their birth,
 A thousand scenes of joy and woe ;
 Thou couldst at will provoke our mirth,
 Or bid our tears of sorrow flow ;
 Alas ! that we,
 Thy lov'd remains in earth laid low,
 Must weep for thee !

The busy fingers never more
 Will scatter stores of "golden grain,"
 Thy triumphs won, thy trials o'er,
 Peace to thy memory : not in vain
 Thy life was spent ;
 Thy heart's best thoughts with us remain—
 Thy years were lent.

M. J. R.



FEATHERSTON'S STORY.

AT THE MAISON ROUGE.

"WHERE *can* Nancy be?"

Miss Preen spoke these words to Mary Cardiac in a sort of flurry. After letting themselves into the house, the petite Maison Rouge, and calling up and down it in vain for Nancy, the question as to where she could be naturally arose.

"She must be spending the evening with the friends she stayed to dine with," said Madame Cardiac.

"I don't know where she would be likely to stay. Unless—yes—perhaps at Mrs. Hardy's."

"That must be it, Lavinia," pronounced Madame Cardiac.

It was then getting towards nine o'clock. They set out again for Mrs. Hardy's to escort Nancy home. She lived in the Rue Lothaire; a long street, leading to the railway station.

Mrs. Hardy was an elderly lady. When near her door they saw her grand-nephew, Charles Palliser, turn out of it. Charley was a good-hearted young fellow, the son of a rich merchant in London. He was staying at Sainteville for the purpose of acquiring the art of speaking French as a native.

"Looking for Miss Ann Preen!" cried he, as they explained in a word or two. "No, she is not at our house; has not been there. I saw her going off this evening by the six o'clock train."

"Going off by the six o'clock train!" echoed Miss Lavinia, staring at him. "Why, what do you mean, Mr. Charles? My sister has not gone off by any train."

"It was in this way," answered the young man, too polite to flatly contradict a lady. "Mrs. Hardy's cousin, Louise Soubitez, came to town this morning; she spent the day with us, and after dinner I went to see her off by the train. And there, at the station, was Miss Ann Preen."

"But not going away by train," returned Miss Lavinia.

"Why, yes she was. I watched the train out of the station. She and Louise Soubitez sat in the same compartment."

A smile stole to Charles Palliser's face. In truth he was amused at Miss Lavinia's consternation. It suddenly struck her that the young man was joking.

"Did you speak to Ann, Mr. Charles?"

"Oh, yes; just a few words. There was not time for much conversation; Louise was late."

Miss Preen felt a little shaken.

"Was Ann alone?"

"No; she was with Captain Fennel."

And, with that, a suspicion of the truth and the full horror of it dawned upon Lavinia Preen. She grasped Madame Cardiac's arm and turned white as death.

"It never can be," she whispered, her lips trembling; "it never can be! She cannot have—have—run away—with that man!"

Unconsciously perhaps to herself, her eyes were fixed on Charles. He thought the question was put to him, and answered it.

"Well—I—I'm afraid it looks like it, as she seems to have said nothing to you," he slowly said. "But I give you my word, Miss Preen, that until this moment that aspect of the matter never suggested itself to me. I supposed they were just going up the line together for some purpose or other; though in fact I hardly thought about it at all."

"And perhaps that is all the mystery!" interposed Madame Cardiac briskly. "He may have taken Ann to Drecques for a little jaunt, and they will be back again by the last train. It must be almost due, Lavinia."

With one impulse they turned to the station, which was near at hand. Drecques, a village, was the first place the trains stopped at on the up-line. The passengers were already issuing from the gate. Standing aside until all had passed, and not seeing Nancy anywhere, Charley Palliser looked into the omnibuses. But she was not there.

"They may have intended to come back and missed the train, Miss Preen; it's very easy to miss a train," said he in his good nature.

"I think it must be so, Lavinia," spoke up Madame Cardiac. "Anyway we will assume it until we hear to the contrary. And, Charley, we had better not talk of this to-night."

"I won't," answered Charley earnestly. "You may be sure or me."

Unless Captain Fennel and Miss Ann Preen chartered a balloon, there was little probability of their reaching Sainteville that evening, for this had been the last train. Lavinia Preen passed a night of discomfort, striving to hope against hope, as the saying runs. Not a very wise saying; it might run better striving to hope against despair.

When Sunday did not bring back the truants, or any news of them, the three in the secret, Mary Cardiac, Lavinia and Charley Palliser, had little doubt that the disappearance meant an elopement. M. Jules Cardiac, not easily understanding such an escapade, so little in accordance with the customs and manners of his own country, said, in his wife's ear, he hoped it would turn out that there was a marriage in the case.

Miss Preen received a letter from Dover pretty early in the week written by Ann. She had been married that day to Captain Fennel.

Altogether, the matter was the most bitter blow ever yet dealt to Lavinia Preen. No living being knew, or ever would know, how cruelly her heart was wrung by it. But, being a kindly woman of good sound sense, she saw that the best must be made of it, not the worst ; and this she set herself out to do. She began by hoping that her own instinct, warning her against Captain Fennel, might be a mistaken one, and that he had a good home to offer his wife and would make her happy in it.

She knew no more about him—his family, his fortune, his former life, his antecedents—than she knew of the man in the moon. Major Smith perhaps did ; he had been acquainted with him in the past. Nancy's letter, though written the previous day, had been delivered by the afternoon post. As soon as she could get dinner over, Lavinia went to Major Smith's. He lived at the top of the Rue Lambeau, a street turning out of the Grande Place. He and his wife, their own dinner just cleared away, were sitting together, the Major indulging in a steaming glass of schiedam and water flavoured with a slice of lemon. He was a very jolly little man, with rosy cheeks and a bald head. They welcomed Miss Lavinia warmly. She, not quite as composed as usual, opened her business without preamble ; her sister Ann had married Captain Fennel, and she had come to ask Major Smith what he knew of him.

"Not very much," answered the Major.

There was something behind his tone, and Lavinia burst into tears. Compassionating her distress, the Major offered her a comforting glass, similar to his own. Lavinia declined it.

"You will tell me what you know," she said ; and he proceeded to do so.

Edwin Fennel, the son of Colonel Fennel, was stationed in India with his regiment for several years. He got on well enough, but was not much liked by his brother officers : they thought him unscrupulous and deceitful. All at once, something very disagreeable occurred, which obliged Captain Fennel to quit Her Majesty's service. The affair was hushed up, out of consideration to his family and his father's long term of service. "In fact, I believe he was allowed to retire, instead of being cashiered," added the Major, "but I am not quite sure which it was."

"What was it that occurred—that Captain Fennel did, to necessitate his dismissal ?" questioned Lavinia.

"I don't much like to mention it," said the Major shaking his head. "It might get about, you see, Miss Preen, which would make it awkward for him. I have no wish, or right either, to do the man a gratuitous injury."

"I promise you it shall not get about through me," returned Lavinia ; "my sister's being his wife will be the best guarantee for that. You must please tell me, Major Smith."

"Well, Fennel was suspected—detected, in short—of cheating at cards."

Lavinia drew a deep breath. "Do you know," she said presently, in an undertone, "that when I first met the man I shrank from his face."

"Oh my! And it has such nice features!" put in Mrs. Smith, who was but a silly little woman.

"There was something in its shifty look which spoke to me as a warning," continued Lavinia. "It did, indeed. All my life I have been able to read faces, and my first instinct has rarely, if ever, deceived me. Each time I have seen this man since, that instinct against him has become stronger."

Major Smith took a draught of his schiedam. "I believe—between ourselves—he is just a mauvais sujet," said he. "He has a brother who is one, out and out; as I chance to know."

"What is Edwin Fennel's income, Major?"

"I can't tell at all. I should not be surprised to hear that he has none."

"How does he live then?" asked Lavinia, her heart going at a gallop.

"Don't know that either," said the Major. "His father is dead now and can't help him. A very respectable man, the old Colonel, but always poor."

"He cannot live upon air; he must have some means," debated Lavinia.

"Lives upon his wits perhaps; some men do. He wanted to borrow ten pounds from me a short time ago," added the Major, taking another sip at his tumbler; "but I told him I had no money to lend—which was a fact. I have an idea that he got it out of Charley Palliser."

The more Lavinia Preen heard of this unhappy case, the worse it seemed to be. Declining to stay for tea, as Mrs. Smith wished, she betook her miserable steps home again, rather wishing that the sea would swallow up Captain Fennel.

The next day she saw Charles Palliser. Pouncing upon him as he was airing his long legs in the Grande Place, she put the question to him in so determined a way that Charley had no chance against her. He turned red.

"I don't know who can have set that about," said he. "But it's true, Miss Preen. Fennel pressed me to lend him ten pounds for a month; and I—well, I did it. I happened to have it in my pocket, you see, having just cashed a remittance from my father."

"Has he repaid you, Mr. Charles?"

"Oh, the month's not quite up yet," cried Charley. "Please don't talk of it, Miss Preen; he wouldn't like it, you know. How on earth it has slipped out I can't imagine."

"No, I shall not talk of it," said Lavinia, as she wished him good-

day and walked onwards, wondering what sort of a home he meant to provide for Ann.

Lavinia Preen's cup of sorrow was not yet full. A morning or two after this she was seated at breakfast, with the window open, when she saw the postman come striding across the yard with a letter. It was from the bride; a very short letter, and one that Miss Lavinia did not at once understand. She read it again.

"MY DEAR LAVINIA,—All being well, we shall be home to-morrow; that is, on the day you receive this letter; reaching Sainteville by the last train in the evening. Please get something nice and substantial for tea, Edwin says, and please see that Flore has the bedroom in good order.
Your affectionate sister,

"ANN FENNEL."

The thing that Miss Lavinia did, when comprehension came to her, was to fly into a passion.

"Come home here; *he*; is that what she means?" cried she. "Never. Have that man in my house? Never, never."

"But what has Mademoiselle received?" exclaimed Flore, appearing just then with a boiled egg. "Is it bad news?"

"It is news that I will not put up with, will not tolerate," cried Miss Lavinia. And, in the moment's dismay, she told the woman what it was.

"Tiens!" commented Flore, taking a common-sense view of matters: "they must be coming just to show themselves to Mademoiselle on their marriage. Likely enough they will not stay more than a night or two, while looking out for an apartment."

Lavinia did not believe it; but the very suggestion somewhat soothed her. To receive that man even for a night or two, as Flore put it, would be to her most repugnant, cruel pain, and she resolved not to do it. Breakfast over, she carried the letter and her trouble to the Rue Pomme Cuite.

"But I am afraid, Lavinia, you cannot refuse to receive them," spoke Madame Cardiac, after considering the problem.

"Not refuse to receive them!" echoed Lavinia. "Why do you say that?"

"Well," replied Mary Cardiac uneasily, for she disliked to add to trouble, "you see the house is as much Ann's as yours. It was taken in your joint names. Ann has the right to return to it; and also, I suppose"—more dubiously—"to introduce her husband into it."

"Is that French law?"

"I think so. I'll ask Jules when he comes home to dinner. Would it not be English law also, Lavinia?"

Lavinia was feeling wretchedly uncomfortable. With all her plain common-sense, this phase of the matter had not struck her.

"Mary," said she—and there stopped, for she was seized with

a violent shiver; which seemed difficult to be accounted for. "Mary, if that man has to take up his abode in the house, I can never stay in it. I would rather die."

"Look here, dear friend," whispered Mary: "life is full of trouble—as Job tells us in the Holy Scriptures—none of us are exempt from it. It attacks us all in turn. The only one thing we can do is to strive to make the best of it, under God; to ask Him to help us. I am afraid there is a severe cross before you, Lavinia; better *bear* it than fight against it."

"I will never bear *that*," retorted Lavinia, turning a deaf ear in her anger. "You ought not to wish me to do so."

"And I would not if I saw anything better for you."

Madame Veuve Sauvage, sitting as usual at her front window that same morning, was surprised at receiving an early call from her tenant, Miss Preen. Madame handed her into her best crimson velvet fauteuil, and they began talking.

Not to much purpose, however; for neither very well understood what the other said. Lavinia tried to explain the object of her visit, but found her French was not equal to it. Madame called her maid, Mariette, and sent her into the shop below to ask M. Gustave to be good enough to step up.

Lavinia had gone to beg of them to cancel the agreement for the little house, so far as her sister was concerned, and to place it in her name only.

Monsieur Gustave, when he had mastered the request, politely answered that such a thing was not practicable; Miss Ann's name could not be struck out of the lease without her consent, or, as he expressed it, break the bail. His mother and himself had every disposition to oblige Miss Preen in any way, as indeed she must know, but they had no power to act against the law.

So poor Miss Lavinia went into her home wringing her hands in despair. She was perfectly helpless.

II.

THE summer days went on. Mr. Edwin Fennel, with all the impudence in the world, had taken up his abode in the petite Maison Rouge, without saying with your leave or by your leave.

"How could you *think* of bringing him here, Ann?" Lavinia demanded of her sister in the first days.

"I did not think of it; it was he thought of it," returned Mrs. Fennel in her simple way. "I feared you would not like it, Lavinia; but what could I do? He seemed to look upon it as a matter of course that he should come."

Yes, there he was; "a matter of course;" making one in the home. Lavinia could not show fight; he was Ann's husband and

the place was as much Ann's as hers. The more Lavinia saw of him the more she disliked him; which was perhaps unreasonable, since he made himself agreeable to her in social intercourse, though he took care to have things his own way. If Lavinia's will went one way in the house and his the other, she found herself smilingly set at naught. Ann was his willing slave; and when opinions differed she sided with her husband.

It was no light charge, having a third person in the house to live upon their small income, especially one who studied his appetite. For a very short time Lavinia, in her indignation at affairs generally, turned the housekeeping over to Mrs. Fennel. But she had to take to it again. Ann was naturally an incautious manager; she ordered in delicacies to please her husband's palate without regard to cost, and nothing could have come of that but debt and disaster.

That the gallant ex-Captain Fennel had married Ann Preen just to have a roof over his head, Lavinia felt as sure of as that the moon occasionally shone in the heavens. She did not suppose he had any other refuge in the wide world. And through something told her by Ann she judged that he had believed he was doing better for himself in marrying than he had done.

The day after the marriage Mr. and Mrs. Fennel were sitting on a bench at Dover, romantically gazing at the sea, honeymoon fashion, and talking of course of hearts and darts. Suddenly the bridegroom turned his thoughts to more practical things.

"Nancy, how do you receive your money — half-yearly or quarterly?" asked he.

"Oh, quarterly," said Nancy. "It is paid punctually to us by the acting trustee, Colonel Selby."

"Ah, yes. Then you have thirty-five pounds every quarter."

"Between us we do," assented Nancy. "Lavinia has seventeen pounds ten, and I have the same; and the Colonel makes us each give a receipt for our own share."

Captain Fennel turned his head and gazed at her with a hard stare.

"You told me your income was a hundred and forty pounds a year."

"Yes, it is that exactly," said she, quietly; "mine and Lavinia's together. We do not each have that, Edwin; I never meant to imply —"

Mrs. Fennel broke off, frightened. On the Captain's face, cruel enough just then, there sat an expression which she might have thought diabolical had it been anyone else's face. Anyway, it scared her.

"What is it?" she gasped.

Rising rapidly, Captain Fennel walked forward, caught up some pebbles, flung them from him and waited, apparently looking to see where they fell. Then he strolled back again.

"Were you angry with me?" faltered Nancy. "Had I done anything?"

"My dear, what should you have done? Angry?" repeated he, in

a light tone as if intensely amused. "You must not take up fancies, Mrs. Fennel."

"I suppose Mrs. Selby thought it would be sufficient income for us, both living together," remarked Nancy. "If either of us should die it all lapses to the other. We found it quite enough last year, I assure you, Edwin; Sainteville is so cheap a place."

"Oh, delightfully cheap," agreed the Captain.

It was this conversation that Nancy repeated to Lavinia; but she did not speak of the queer look which had frightened her. Lavinia saw that Mr. Edwin Fennel had taken up a wrong idea of their income. Of course the disappointment angered him.

An aspect of semi-courtesy was outwardly maintained in the intercourse of home life. Lavinia was a gentlewoman; she had not spoken unpleasant things to the Captain's face, or hinted that he was a weight upon the housekeeping pocket; while he, as yet, was quite officiously civil to her. But there was no love lost between them; and Lavinia could not divest her mind of an undercurrent of conviction that he was, in some way or other, a man to be dreaded.

Thus Captain Fennel (as he was mostly called) being domiciled with the estimable ladies in the petite Maison Rouge, grew to be considered one of the English colony of Sainteville and was received as such. As nobody knew aught against him, nobody thought anything. Major Smith had not spoken of antecedents, neither had Miss Preen; the Cardiacs, who were in the secret, never spoke ill of anyone: and as the Captain could assume pleasing manners at will, he became fairly well liked by his country people in a passing sort of way.

Lavinia Preen sat one day upon the low edge of the pier, her back to the sun and the sea. She had called in at the little shoe shop on the port, just as you turn out of the Rue Tessin, and had left her parasol there. The sun was not then out in the grey sky, and she did not miss it. Now that the sun was shining and the grey canopy above had become blue, she said to herself that she had been stupid. It was September weather, so the sun was not unbearable.

Lavinia Preen was thinner; the thralldom of the past three months had made her so. Now and then it would cross her mind to leave the petite Maison Rouge to its married inmates; but for Nancy's sake she hesitated. Nancy had made the one love of her life, and Nancy had loved her in return. Now, the love was chiefly given to the new tie she had formed; Lavinia was second in every respect.

"They go their way now, and I have to go mine," sighed Lavinia as she sat this morning on the pier. "Even my walks have to be solitary."

A cloud came sailing up and the sun went in again. Lavinia rose; she walked onwards till she came to the end of the pier, where she again sat down. The next moment, chancing to look the way she had come, she saw a lady and gentleman advancing arm-in-arm.

"Oh, *they* are on the pier, are they!" mentally spoke Lavinia. For it was Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Fennel.

Nancy sat down beside her. "It is a long walk!" cried she, drawing a quick breath or two. "Lavinia, what do you think we have just heard?"

"How can I tell?" returned the elder sister.

"You know those queer people, an old English aunt and three nieces, who took Madame Gibon's rooms in the Rue Ménar? They have all disappeared and have paid nobody," continued Nancy. "Charley Palliser told us just now; he was laughing like anything over it."

"I never thought they looked like people to be trusted," remarked Lavinia. "Dear me! here's the sun coming out again."

"Where is your parasol?"

Lavinia recounted her negligence in having left it at the shoe mart. Captain Fennel had brought out a small silk umbrella; he turned from the end of the pier, where he stood looking out to sea, opened the umbrella and offered it.

"It is not much larger than a good-sized parasol," remarked he. "Pray take it, Miss Lavinia."

Lavinia did so after a moment's imperceptible hesitation, and thanked him. She hated to be under the slightest obligation to him, but the sun was now full in her eyes and might make her head ache.

The pleasant smell of a cigar caused them to look up. A youngish man, rather remarkably tall, with a shepherd's plaid across his broad shoulders, was striding up the pier. He sat down near Miss Preen, and she glanced round at him. Appearing to think that she looked at his cigar, he immediately threw it into the sea behind him.

"Oh, I am sorry you did that," said Lavinia, speaking impulsively. "I like the smell of a cigar."

"Oh, thank you; thank you very much," he answered. "I had nearly smoked it out."

Voice and manner were alike pleasant and easy, and Lavinia spoke again—some trivial remark about the fine expanse of sea; upon which they drifted into conversation. We are reserved enough with strangers at home, we Islanders, as the world knows, but most of us are less ungracious abroad.

"Sainteville seems a clean, healthy place," remarked the newcomer.

"Very," said Miss Lavinia. "Do you know it well?"

"I never saw it before to-day," he replied. "I have come here from Douai to meet a friend, having two or three days to spare."

"Douai is a fine town," remarked Captain Fennel, turning to speak, for he was still looking out over the sea and had his opera-glasses in his hand. "I spent a week there not long ago."

"Douai?" exclaimed Nancy. "That's the place where the great law courts are, is it not? Don't you remember the man last year, Lavinia, who committed some dreadful crime, and was taken up to Douai to be tried at the Assizes there?"

"We have a great case coming on there as soon as the Courts meet," said the stranger, who seemed a talkative man; "and that's what I am at Douai for. A case of extensive swindling."

"You are a lawyer, I presume," said Miss Preen.

The stranger nodded. "Being the only one of our London firm who can speak French readily, and we are four of us in it, I had to come over and watch this affair and wait for the trial. For the young fellow is an Englishman, I am sorry to say, and his people, worthy and well-to-do merchants, are nearly mad over it."

"But did he commit it in England?" cried Miss Preen.

"Oh, no; in France; within the arrondissement of the Douai Courts. He is in prison there. I daresay you get some swindling in a pretty way even at Sainteville," added the speaker.

"That we do," put in Nancy. "An English family of ladies ran away only yesterday, owing twenty pounds at least, it is said."

"Ah," said the stranger with a smile. "I think the ladies are sometimes more clever at that game than the men. By the way," he went on briskly, "do you know a Mr. Dangerfield at Sainteville?"

"No," replied Lavinia.

"He is staying here, I believe, or has been."

"Not that I know of," said Lavinia. "I never heard his name."

"Changed it again probably," carelessly observed the young man.

"Is Dangerfield not his true name, then?"

"Just as much as it is mine, madam. His real name is Fennel; but he has found it convenient to drop that on occasion."

Now it was a curious fact that Nancy did not hear the name which the stranger had given as the true one. Her attention was diverted by some men who were working at the mud in the harbour, for it was low water, and who were loudly disputing together. Nancy had moved to the side of the pier to look down at them.

"Is he a swindler, that Mr. Dangerfield?" asked she, half turning her head to speak. But the stranger did not answer.

As to Lavinia, the avowal had struck her speechless. She glanced at Captain Fennel: he had his back to them, and stood immovable, apparently unconcerned, possibly not having heard. A thought struck her—and frightened her.

"Do you know that Mr. Dangerfield yourself?" she asked the stranger, in a tone of indifference.

"No, I do not," he said, "but there's a man coming over in yonder boat who does."

He pointed over his shoulder at the sea as he spoke. Lavinia glanced quickly in the same direction. "In yonder boat?" she repeated vaguely.

"I mean the London boat, which is on its way here and will get in this evening," he explained.

"Oh, of course," said Lavinia, as if her wits had been gathering wool.

The young man took out his watch and looked at it. Then he rose, lifted his hat, and with a general good-morning, walked quickly down the pier.

Nancy was still at the side of the pier, looking down at the men. Captain Fennel put up his glasses and sat down beside Lavinia, his impassive face still as usual.

"I wonder who that man is?" he cried, watching the footsteps of the retreating stranger.

"Did you hear what he said?" asked Lavinia, dropping her voice.

"Yes. Had Nancy not been here, I should have given him a taste of my mind, but she hates even the semblance of a quarrel. He had no right to say what he did."

"What could it have meant?" murmured Lavinia.

"It meant my brother, I expect," said Captain Fennel savagely, and, as Lavinia thought, with every appearance of truth. "But he has never been at Sainteville, so far as I know; the fellow is mistaken in that."

"Does he pass under the name of Dangerfield?"

"Possibly. This is the first I've heard of it. He is an extravagant man, often in embarrassment from debt. There's nothing worse against him."

He did not say more; neither did Lavinia. They sat on in silence. The tall figure in the Scotch plaid disappeared from sight; the men in the harbour kept on disputing.

"How long are you going to stay here?" asked Nancy, turning towards her husband.

"I'm ready to go now," he answered. And giving his arm to Nancy, they walked down the pier together.

Never a word to Lavinia; never a question put by him or by Nancy, if only to say "Are you not coming with us?" It was ever so now. Nancy, absorbed in her husband, neglected her sister.

Lavinia sighed. She sat on a little while longer, and then took her own departure.

The shoe shop on the port was opposite the place in the harbour where the London steamers were generally moored. The one now there was taking in cargo. As Lavinia was turning into the shop for her parasol, she heard a stentorian English voice call out to a man on board who was superintending the work in his shirt-sleeves: "At what hour does this boat leave to-night?"

"At eight o'clock, sir," was the answer. "Eight sharp; we want to get away with the first o' the tide."

From Miss Lavinia Preen's Diary.

September 22nd.—The town clocks have just struck eight, and I could almost fancy that I hear the faint sound of the boat steaming down the harbour in the dark night, carrying Nancy away with it, and carrying *him*. However, that is fancy and nothing else, for the sound could not penetrate to me here.

Perhaps it surprised me, perhaps it did not, when Nancy came to me this afternoon as I was sitting in my bedroom reading Scott's "Legend of Montrose," which Mary Cardiac had lent me from her little stock of English books, and said she and Captain Fennel were going to London that night by the boat. He had received a letter, he told her, calling him thither. He might tell Nancy that if he liked, but it would not do for me. He is going, as I can only believe, in consequence of what that gentleman in the shepherd's plaid said on the pier to-day. Can it be that the "Mr. Dangerfield" spoken of applies to Edwin Fennel himself and not to his brother? Is he finding himself in some dangerous strait, and is running away from the individual coming over in the approaching boat, who personally knows Mr. Dangerfield? "Can you lend me a five-pound note, Lavinia?" Nancy went on, when she had told me the news; "lend it to myself, I mean. I will repay you when I receive my next quarter's income, which is due you know in a few days." I chanced to have a five-pound note by me in my own private store, and I gave it her, reminding her that unless she did let me have it again, it would be so much less in hand to meet expenses with, and that I had found difficulty enough in the past quarter. "On the other hand," said Nancy, "if I and Edwin stay away a week or two, you will be spared our housekeeping; and when our money comes, Lavinia, you can open my letter and repay yourself if I am not here. I don't at all know where we are going to stay," she said, in answer to my question. "I was beginning to ask Edwin just now in the other room, but he was busy packing his portmanteau, and told me not to bother him."

And so, there it is: they are gone, and I am left here all alone.

I wonder whether any Mr. Dangerfield has been at Sainteville? I think we should have heard the name—— Why, that is the door bell! I must go and answer it.

It was Charley Palliser. He had come with a message from Major and Mrs. Smith. They are going to Drecques to-morrow morning by the eleven o'clock train with a few friends and a basket of provisions, and had sent Charley to say they would be glad of my company. "Do come, Miss Preen," urged Charley as I hesitated; "you are all alone now, and I'm sure it must be dreadfully dull."

"How do you know I am alone?" I asked.

"Because," said Charley, "I have been watching the London boat out, and I saw Captain Fennel and your sister go by it. Major and Mrs. Smith were with me. It is a lovely night."

"Wait a moment," I said, as Charley was about to depart when I had accepted the invitation. "Do you know whether an Englishman named Dangerfield is living here?"

"Don't think there is; I have not met with him," said Charley. "Why, Miss Preen?"

"Oh, only that I was asked to-day whether I knew anyone of that name," I returned carelessly. "Good-night, Mr. Charles. Thank you for coming."

They have invited me finding I was left alone, and I think it very kind of them, but the Smiths are both kind-hearted people.

September 23rd.—Half-past nine o'clock, p.m. Have just returned from Drecques by the last train after spending a pleasant day. Quiet, of course, for there is not much to do at Drecques except stroll over the ruins of the old castle, or saunter about the quaint little ancient town, and go into the grand old church. It was so fine and warm that we had dinner on the grass, the people at the cottage bringing out plates and knives and forks. Later in the day we took tea indoors. In the afternoon when all the rest were scattered about, and the Major sat smoking his cigar on the bench under the trees, I sat down by him to tell him what happened yesterday, and I begged him to give me his opinion. It was no betrayal of confidence, for Major Smith is better acquainted with the shady side of the Fennels than I am.

"I heard there was an English lawyer staying at the Hôtel des Princes, and that he had come here from Douai," observed the Major. "His name's Lockett. It must have been he who spoke to you on the pier."

"Yes, of course. Do you know, Major, whether anyone has stayed at Sainteville passing as Mr. Dangerfield?"

"I don't think so," replied the Major. "Unless he has kept himself remarkably quiet."

"Could it apply to Captain Fennel?"

"I never knew that he had gone under an assumed name. The accusation is one more likely to apply to his brother than to himself. James Fennel is unscrupulous, very incautious: notwithstanding that, I like him better than I like the other. There's something about Edwin Fennel that repels you; at least it does me; but one can hardly help liking James, mauvais sujet though he is," added the speaker, pausing to flirt off the ashes of his cigar.

"The doubt pointing to Edwin Fennel in the affair is his suddenly decamping," continued Major Smith. "It was quite impromptu, you say, Miss Preen?"

"Quite so. I feel sure he had no thought of going away in the morning; and he did not receive any letter from England later,

which was the excuse he gave Nancy for departing. Rely upon it that what he heard about the Mr. Dangerfield on the pier drove him away."

"Well, that looks suspicious, you see."

"Oh, yes, I do see it," I answered, unable to conceal the pain I felt. "It was a bitter calamity, Major Smith, when Nancy married him."

"I'll make a few cautious inquiries in the town and try to find out if there's anything against him in secret, or if any man named Dangerfield has been in the place and got into a mess. But, indeed, I don't altogether see that it could apply to him," concluded the Major after a pause. "One can't well go under two names in the same town; and everyone knows him as Edwin Fennel.—Here they are some of them coming back!" And when the wanderers were close up, they found Major Smith arguing with me about the architecture of the castle.

Ten o'clock. Time for bed. I am in no haste to go, for I don't sleep as well as I used to sleep.

A thought has lately sometimes crossed me that this miserable trouble worries me more than it ought to do. "Accept it as your cross, and *yield* to it, Lavinia," says Mary Cardiac to me. But I *cannot* yield to it; that is, I cannot in the least diminish the anxiety which always clings to me, or forget the distress and dread that lie upon me like a shadow. I know that my life has been on the whole an easy life, that during all the years I spent at Selby Court I never had any trouble; I know that crosses do come to us all, earlier or later, and that I ought not to be surprised that "no new thing has happened to me," the world being full of such experiences. I suppose it is because I have been so exempt from care, that I feel this the more.

Half-past ten! just half-an-hour writing these last few lines and *thinking*! Time I put up. I wonder when I shall hear from Nancy?

III.

A CURIOUS phase, taken in conjunction with what was to follow, now occurred in the history. Miss Preen began to experience a nervous dread at going into the petite-Maison Rouge at night.

She could go into the house ten times a day when it was empty; she could stay in the house alone in the evening after Flore took her departure; she could be its only inmate all night long; and never at these times have the slightest sense of fear. But if she went out to spend the evening, she felt an unaccountable dread, amounting to horror, at entering it when she arrived home.

It came on suddenly. One evening when Lavinia had been at Mrs. Hardy's, Charley Palliser having run over to London, she returned home a little before ten o'clock. Opening the door with her latch-key, she was stepping into the passage, when a sharp horror of entering it seized her. A dread, as it seemed to her, of going into

the empty house, up the long, dark, narrow passage. It was the same sort of sensation which had struck her the first time she attempted to enter it under the escort of M. Gustave Sauvage, and it came on now with as little reason as it had come on then. For Lavinia this night had not a thought in her mind of fear or loneliness, or anything else unpleasant. Mrs. Hardy had been relating a laughable adventure that Charley Palliser met with on board the boat when going over, the account of which he had written to her, and Lavinia was thinking brightly of it all the way home. She was smiling to herself as she unlatched the door and opened it. And then, without warning, arose the horrible fear.

How she conquered it sufficiently to enter the passage and reach the slab, where her candle and matches were always placed, she did not know. It had to be done, for Lavinia Preen could not remain in the dark yard all night, or patrol the streets; but her face had turned moist, and her hands trembled.

That was the beginning of it. Never since had she come home in the same way at night but the same terror assailed her; and I must beg the reader to understand that this is no invention. Devoid of reason and unaccountable though the terror was, Lavinia Preen experienced it.

She went out often—two or three times a week, perhaps—either to dine or to spend the evening. Captain Fennel and Nancy were still away, and friends, remembering Miss Preen's solitary position, invited her.

October had passed, November was passing, and as yet no news came to Lavinia of the return of the travellers. At first they did not write to her at all, leaving her to infer that as the boat reached London safely, they had done the same. After the lapse of a fortnight, she received a short letter from Nancy, telling her really nothing, and not giving any address. The next letter came towards the end of November, and was as follows:

"MY DEAR LAVINIA,—I have not written to you, for, truly, there is nothing to write about, and almost every day I expect Edwin to tell me we are going home. Will you *kindly* lend me a ten-pound note? Please send it in a letter. We are staying at Camberwell, and I enclose you the address in strict confidence. Do not repeat it to anyone—not even to Mary Cardiac. It is a relation of Edwin's we are staying with, but he is not well off. I like his wife. Edwin desires his best regards.

Your loving sister,

"NANCY."

Miss Preen did not send the ten-pound note. She wrote to tell Nancy that she could not do it, and was uncomfortably pressed for money herself in consequence of Nancy's own action.

The five-pound note borrowed from Lavinia by Nancy on her departure had not been repaid; neither had Nancy's share of the

previous quarter's money been remitted. On the usual day of payment at the end of September, Lavinia's quarterly income came to her at Sainteville, as was customary; not Nancy's. For Nancy there came neither money nor letter. The fact was, Nancy, escorted by her husband, had presented herself at Colonel Selby's bank—he was junior partner and manager of a small private bank in the City—the day before the dividends were due, and personally claimed the quarterly payment, which was paid to her.

But now, the summary docking of just half their income was a matter of embarrassment to Miss Preen, as may readily be imagined. The house expenses had to go on, with only half the money to meet them. Lavinia had a little nest-egg of her own, it has been said before, saved in earlier years; and this she drew upon, and so kept debt down. But it was very inconvenient, as well as vexatious. Lavinia told the whole truth now to Mary Cardiac and her husband, with Nancy's recent application for a ten-pound note, and her refusal. Little M. Cardiac muttered a word between his closed lips which sounded like "Rat," and was no doubt applied to Edwin Fennel.

Pretty close upon this, Lavinia received a blowing-up letter from Colonel Selby. Having known Lavinia when she was in pinafores, the Colonel, a peppery man, considered he had a right to take her to task at will. He was brother to Paul Selby, of Selby Court, and heir presumptive to it. The Colonel had a wife and children, and much ado at times to keep them, for his income was not large at present, and growing-up sons are expensive.

"DEAR LAVINIA,—What in the name of common-sense could have induced you to imagine that I should pay the two quarterly incomes some weeks before they were due, and to send Ann and that man Fennel here with your orders that I should do so? Pretty ideas of trusteeship you must have! If you are over head and ears in debt, as they tell me, and for that reason wish to forestall the time for payment, I can't help it. It is no reason with me. Your money will be forwarded to Sainteville, at the proper period, to *yourself*. Do not ask me again to pay it into Ann's hands, and to accept her receipt for it. I can do nothing of the kind. Ann's share will be sent at the same time. She tells me she is returning to you. She must give me her own receipt for it, and you must give yours.

"Your affectionate kinsman,

"WILLIAM SELBY."

Just for a few minutes Lavinia Preen did not understand this letter. What could it mean? Why had Colonel Selby written it to her? Then the truth flashed into her mind.

Nancy (induced, of course, by Edwin Fennel) had gone with him to Colonel Selby, purporting to have been sent by Lavinia, to ask him to pay them the quarter's money not due until the end of December, and not only Nancy's share but Lavinia's as well.

"Why, it would have been nothing short of swindling!" cried Lavinia, as she gazed in dismay at the Colonel's letter.

In the indignation of the moment, she took pen and ink and wrote an answer to William Selby. Partly enlightening him; not quite; but telling him that her money must never be paid to anyone but herself, and that the present matter had better be hushed up for Ann's sake, who was as a reed in the hands of the man she had married.

Colonel Selby exploded a little when he received this answer. Down he sat in his turn, and wrote a short, sharp note to Edwin Fennel, giving that estimable man a little of his mind, and warning him that he must not be surprised if the police were advised to look after him.

When Edwin Fennel received this decisive note through an address he had given to Colonel Selby, but not the one at Camberwell, he called Miss Lavinia Preen all the laudatory names in the thieves' dictionary.

And on the feast of St. Andrew, which as everyone knows is the last day of November, the letters came to an end with the following one from Nancy:

"All being well, my dear Lavinia, we purpose to return home by next Sunday's boat, which ought to get in before three o'clock in the afternoon. On Wednesday, Edwin met Charley Palliser in the Strand, and had a chat with him, and heard all the Sainteville news; not that there seemed much to hear. Charley says he runs over to London pretty often now, his mother being ill. Of course you will not mind waiting dinner for us on Sunday.

"Ever your loving sister,

"ANN."

So at length they were coming! Either that threat of being looked after by the police had been too much for Captain Fennel, or the failure to obtain funds was cutting short his stay in London. Anyway, they were coming. Lavinia laid the letter beside her breakfast plate and fell into thought. She resolved to welcome them graciously, and to say nothing about by-gones.

Flore was told the news, and warned that instead of dining at half-past one on the morrow, the usual Sunday hour, it would be delayed until three. Flore did not much like the prospect of her afternoon's holiday being shortened, but there was no help for it. Lavinia provided a couple of ducks for dinner, going into the market after breakfast to buy them; the dish was an especial favourite of the Captain's. She invited Mary Cardiac to partake of it, for M. Cardiac was going to spend Sunday at Lille with an old friend of his, who was now master of the College there.

On this evening, Saturday, Lavinia dined out herself. Some ladies named Bosanquet, three sisters, with whom she had become

pretty intimate, called at the little Maison Rouge, and carried her off to their home in the Rue Lamartine, where they had lived for years. After a very pleasant evening with them, Lavinia left at ten o'clock.

And when she reached her own door, and was putting the latch-key into the lock, the old dread fear came over her. Dropping her hands, she stood there trembling. She looked round at the silent, deserted yard, she looked up at the high encircling walls; she glanced at the frosty sky and the bright stars; and she stood there shivering.

But she must go in. Throwing the door back with an effort of will, she turned sick and faint: to enter that dark, lonely, empty house seemed beyond her strength and courage. What could this strange feeling portend?—why should it thus attack her? It was just as if some fatality were in the house waiting to destroy her, and a subtle power would keep her from entering it.

Her heart beating wildly, her breath laboured, Lavinia went in; she shut the door behind her and sped up the passage. Feeling for the match-box on the slab, put ready to her hand, she struck a match and lighted the candle. At that moment, when turning round, she saw, or thought she saw, Captain Fennel. He was standing just within the front door, which she had now come in at, staring at her with a fixed gaze, and with the most malignant expression on his usually impassive face. Lavinia's terror partly gave place to astonishment. Was it he himself? How had he come in?

Turning to take the candle from the slab in her bewilderment, when she looked again he was gone. What had become of him? Lavinia called to him by name, but he did not answer. She took the candle into the salon, though feeling sure he could not have come up the passage; but he was not there. Had he slipped out again? Had she left the door open when thinking she closed it, and had he followed her in, and was now gone again? Lavinia carried her lighted candle to the door, and found it was fastened. She had *not* left it open.

Then, as she undressed in her room, trying all the while to solve the problem, an idea crept into her mind that the appearance might have been supernatural. Yet—supernatural visitants of the living do not appear to us, but of the dead. Was Edwin Fennel dead?

So disturbed was the brain of Lavinia Preen that she could not get to sleep; but tossed and turned about the bed almost until daybreak. At six o'clock she fell into an uneasy slumber, and into a most distressing dream.

It was a confused dream; nothing in it was clear. All she knew when she awoke was that she had appeared to be in a state of inexplicable terror, of most intense apprehension throughout it, arising from some evil threatened her by Captain Fennel.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.

BRUSSELS. JUNE, 1815.

BY THE HON. MRS. ARMYTAGE.

THERE are three ladies still living among us who can recall many details of those eventful days when the Battle of Waterloo was fought, the heavy cannonading almost within sound, as they pursued their daily tasks in a quaint old house in the Rue de la Blanchisserie at Brussels. More than this, these three ladies are sisters, and are the sole survivors of the thirteen children of Charles, Fourth Duke of Richmond.

As they sit by their quiet firesides and muse of the long years past and gone, what memories of those days must flit across their minds in this year 1889, as some chance word or inquiry brings back to their thoughts those bright June days seventy-three years ago, when the large family party were gathered round the Duke and Duchess. With faithful memory they relate much that is interesting, and we look with wonder at these octogenarians, and think of the thrilling events with which their young lives were once so closely associated.

At the time when the peace of Europe had been disturbed by the re-appearance of Napoleon, the Duke and Duchess of Richmond were settled in Brussels living in that house, the site of which has lately been so fully discussed.

Three of the Duke's sons were already holding commissions in the army. Lord March, Lord George and Lord William. The latter, very lately gazetted to the Blues, met with a bad accident while staying at the Château d'Enghien with the Duke of Wellington; an accident which prevented his being present at the Battle of Waterloo, and occasioned the loss of the sight of one eye. The great Duke was an intimate friend, so that military enthusiasm was found in every member of the family.

The Duke and Duchess of Richmond mixed in all the society of Brussels, and often entertained at their own house. Three of the Ladies Lennox were of an age to take part in any festivities, and *Lodge's Peerage* tells that the second daughter, Lady Sarah, was married a very few months after Waterloo was fought to one who had distinguished himself in that action, one of the Duke's staff officers.

All the researches lately discussed as to the exact situation of the House have only proved its utter destruction, and that no traces of the old house exist. Even the large chestnut trees have been cut down. But in 1815 it stood in its own grounds, with fruit and flower garden reaching to the city ramparts; but the ladies alluded to are clear in their recollections of the plan of the rooms, and distinctly deny the idea (propounded by someone) that the

famous "Waterloo Ball" was given in a coach-builder's store-room. For they can tell of the *Porte Cochère* through which they passed to the garden entrance; of another approach to the hall, passing by the stables, with their recollection of the position of billiard-room, dining-room and their father's study, passing up a few steps to the long room appropriated as a schoolroom for the younger branches of the family, and which they are all equally certain was the actual apartment used as a ball-room upon this eventful evening.

It was certainly no "high hall" with windowed niche, but a long narrow room with windows on the side facing the stables. No doubt the ball had been arranged some time, and the great Duke had no wish that it should be postponed on account of the reported approach of the French army, though many English families had been frightened into retreating from Brussels, and post-horses were kept harnessed in readiness at the Duke of Richmond's stables in case bad news from the scene of conflict should make it advisable for the children to be sent to Antwerp.

A large number of our troops were already out of reach, the Guards were at Enghien, and few, if any, of the officers could have obtained leave to attend the ball.

The nearest neighbours in Brussels appear to have been violent Bonapartists, and were prepared to entertain Napoleon in great style, when he had successfully forced the British army to retreat and should himself enter the Belgian capital in triumph. Lord Byron's lines in "*Childe Harold*" are so engraven on men's minds that it was long believed that the ball actually took place on the 17th of June, and that the orders for the route were delivered in the very midst of the festivities. Not so. It was on the 15th of June; and as the guests arrived and passed through the hall and on to the ball-room, so the evening went on without a panic of any sort.

Certainly, while merry couples were flying round, a despatch reached the Duke of Wellington from the front, and he asked his host for a private room where he could speak to one or two of the generals who were present. The Duchess's dressing-room was the only convenient apartment safe from intrusion. Candles were hastily lit on the dressing-table at which the Duke sat with a map of the country before him, and having explained certain points to his staff, they all re-joined the company and left the house without attracting any remark.

Very few indeed, if any, guessed how near the crisis was which should decide the fate of Europe; and it never entered into the minds of the happy girls as they danced so gaily that to many of their partners it might possibly be the very last dance they would ever enjoy.

Lady Georgina is the only sister still living who was grown up then, whilst Lady Louisa and Lady Sophia were only old enough to look on as children while their elder sisters danced all night. Of

these three sisters all are now widows, Lady Georgina having married the late Lord de Ros, a gallant soldier, who distinguished himself in the Crimean campaign. Lady Louisa is the widow of Mr. Tighe, of Woodstock, an Irish landlord, whose memory is still loved and respected all through the county of Kilkenny. Lady Sophia married the late Lord Thomas Cecil, who held a commission in the 10th Hussars.

From the lips of these ladies we gather these interesting reminiscences. How they remember the soldier brother's farewell on the day after the ball (Lord George's charger was killed under him at Waterloo), with recollections of the anxiety felt by all on the following day. How the news of the great victory speedily reached the Duchess, her husband having ridden out to see how the battle raged, having witnessed the splendid charge of English troops which decided the day and scattered the proud Imperial Guard.

Too well can they remember seeing rough country carts coming slowly into town carrying wounded men to the hospitals, the accommodation supplemented by lace merchants and city people giving up rooms and warehouses for their reception, whilst the little ladies were soon permitted to take dainty nourishment and little comforts to the disabled heroes of Waterloo.

A visit of congratulation to the great commander is also impressed on the mind as they went with the Duchess to see the Duke a few days after, for her children were his special favourites; and they recall that his face was sad and his words sorrowful as he spoke of the loss of so many gallant men. Then, ere long, a visit to the battlefield and a glance at the Château of Houguemont, with purchase of real relics as they were collected from the fragments of shot and shell, and shattered remnants of cavalry and infantry accoutrements. Then the great day of public thanksgiving, when the Prince of Orange at the head of all his troops marched through Brussels and into the cathedral for a Service of Praise, and the *Te Deum* was sung by a hundred voices for deliverance from the foe, Lord March (their brother) standing close to the Prince, whose A.D.C. he was. Then a few more weeks, and the arrival of the famous story-telling historian and novelist is an event not to be forgotten, as Sir Walter Scott appears a guest at the Duke of Richmond's table, determined to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the details of the campaign for his "*Life of Napoleon*."

Thus, though stones and buildings have disappeared, and no trace of house or garden be left, the recollections of living actors in the scenes recall to those who are privileged to listen all the painful excitement of those days gone by at Brussels in 1815.

A DAY AT MALTA.

BY CHARLES W. WOOD, F.R.G.S., AUTHOR OF "LETTERS FROM MAJORCA," ETC.



EUROPA POINT.

WE left Gibraltar "as the clocks were striking the hour," though it was not the midnight hour. The strains of the military band on the Alameda grew faint and fainter yet; the lights died out; very soon the outlines of the gigantic rock could no longer be traced. We ploughed our course through the wide waste. In due time we passed through the Straits, and once more were on the deep blue waters of the Mediterranean: to see whose shores, said Dr. Johnson, was the great object of travelling. I don't know whether he would have said so had he lived in these days; but it is doubtful whether any other shores can equal them.

It was Monday night and we were due at Malta on the Friday morning. During the intervening days we should touch nowhere; see very little of the Egyptian coast and nothing of the European. In the course of our journey we should at one moment pass not far from our dear Palma de Mallorca. If only we could bribe the Captain to put in for an hour or two, that we might once more gaze upon the grand outlines of the Cathedral, revisit some of our favourite Courts, give the *Bon jour* to good old Don Negro, and assure the fair Mallorquinas that H. C. was faithful to them!

It was not to be thought of. The Captain kept on his course as straight as an arrow from a bow. He would not budge a mile to right or left for a Jew's ransom, or even to be made Commodore of the P. and O. Service.

Two of our sextett had left us at Gibraltar. But as the judge remained, with all his humour, his strange experiences of human nature, his fund of anecdote, and his quaint and original views of life, we felt that we had still a great deal of social enjoyment before us. We were by no means abandoned, and not at all depressed.



APPROACHING GIBRALTAR, FROM SPANISH SIDE.

But the next morning a shock awaited us. The head-steward, with a cruelty never yet attained to in the history of the world : without saying with your leave or by your leave, or giving us the smallest intimation of his treason : had removed our seats to the long and noisy centre table. Our own table had nothing but its ordinary after-breakfast, all-day-long red cloth upon it.

It was impossible to say much at the moment, but we did go up to the under-steward in the hope of a quiet explanation.

"Did you think we had *all* landed at Gibraltar? Why has our small table been taken from us?"

"It is by the chief-steward's directions, sir. I have nothing to do with it."

"But the chief-steward had no right to do this. Our places were settled when we came on board, and to shift us about in this way without asking our pleasure in the matter is to treat us very unfairly. No one else has been moved. Why have we been made the exception?"

"I am very sorry, sir. I have only obeyed orders."

Nothing more could be said for the present. The chief-steward has, of course, nothing to do with the *waiting* on board and was not in the saloon. He is head of the commissariat department. Upon him depends much of the comfort of the passengers : and it is only right to add that on few vessels would one fare better than on board the *Batavia*.

We sat down to breakfast in a frame of mind that I fear was not very happy or amiable. Our little coterie was broken up. All pleasant converse, all the fun and laughter we had so much enjoyed, was summarily put an end to. Four people all in a row can hardly keep up a conversation. Hitherto we had heard the Babel, but had been outside it, as it were ; it had not affected us, except with a sort of agreeable feeling that we *were* outside it. Now we were in its very centre ; and the crowd seemed as confusing as the noise. It was quite a study of character only to listen to the varieties of laughs round about us. For there is a very great deal in a laugh.

Opposite to us as fate would have it, sat an old lady who looked upon us as ogres, because two nights before, Mauleverer, in turning a large atlas he was consulting, had upset a glass of beer, which had just escaped her husband's knees, who was sitting at the same table. She herself was occupying a side seat, far out of danger. Nevertheless she sprang up as if a gun had suddenly gone off behind her, put on a severe expression, and marked her displeasure by dragging her husband to the other end of the saloon.

He protested.

"My dear, only a little accident. No harm done. I prefer *this* end of the saloon. The other end is too close to the stewards' quarters. Rattling of cups and saucers, popping of corks, much talk but little wit."

It was useless. He was evidently hen-pecked, and had to submit. From the other side the old lady glared at us for full five minutes. Mauleverer quietly ordered another supply of the golden beverage, and she looked as if she would like to punish him by pouring it into the sea and sending him after it. Had he been her better-half, no doubt this might have happened. "Is marriage a failure?" he whispered; and if the old lady had heard him, I doubt if his life would have been worth an hour's purchase.

This lady, from her imposing turban, her conscious air of being much wiser than her neighbours, and her magisterial way of laying down the law, had become "Minerva" to all on board, after the second day's sailing.

As we took our seats this morning, Minerva turned all the colours of the rainbow. Her hair bristled and her turban trembled. She glared at our breakfast cups, as if to ask whether they would share the fate of the overturned glass; and she gathered her skirts about her, and called her husband's attention to their perilous position.

This morning her *pro bono* conversation was all about servants; chiefly English servants. They were all as bad as they could be. She wouldn't trust one of them. The women all ran after the soldiers, and the soldiers were the most demoralised and demoralising set of men on the face of the globe. If the women were pretty they were no better than they ought to be, and if they were ugly they had unbearable tempers. Thank goodness she was going back to Malta. There if a soldier only came in sight of her territories, he had seven days' cell and a month's extra drill for his pains. Her husband was a magistrate, and there was a power behind the throne, etc. etc.

Next to her sat a lady who had amused us all through the voyage. Mauleverer called her Miss Lydia Languish, though she must have been well on in the forties, and might have passed very well for Miss Lydia's mamma. She posed and attitudinised all day long as if she were studying for Tableaux Vivants, and her upright airs and graces were an excellent foil to the Australian lady as she reclined in her opossum rugs and flashed her rings in the sunlight. Though apart from her little airs, which after all some people would have called pretty, the Australian was really very nice.

But Miss Languish was not nice, and her chief characteristic was her propensity for using all the long words contained in the dictionary with very little regard to quantity or meaning: so that to the virtues of the above-mentioned lady she added those of the no less celebrated Mrs. Malaprop.

This morning she had very little opportunity of indulging in her affection for long words—or short ones either. Minerva had possession of the ball of conversation and kept it. Miss C., the judge's daughter, sat next to me, and her father came next to her.

"So glad you have joined us!" cried Minerva to Miss C., as the latter took her seat at the table.

"Are you? We are not at all glad," replied Miss C. straightforwardly. "We much preferred our own table, and want to go back to it. I can't think why they have moved us. Papa is furious."

Minerva was slightly deaf, and across the table heard all this *à tort et à travers*. This no doubt accounted for her loud whispers to her husband. Deaf people shout and fancy they are using the most subdued tones.

"So glad you wanted to come," cried Minerva. "We are now just as we should be." And then she glared at us as much as to say that we had no part or lot in her congratulations and needn't think it.

"A most deleterious combination of circumstances," added Miss Languish, determined to get in a word edgeways, and upsetting a small jug of milk as she put it down with an air. "Dear me! Look at that! We must be rolling on foamy billows again, as we were in that meretricious bay!"

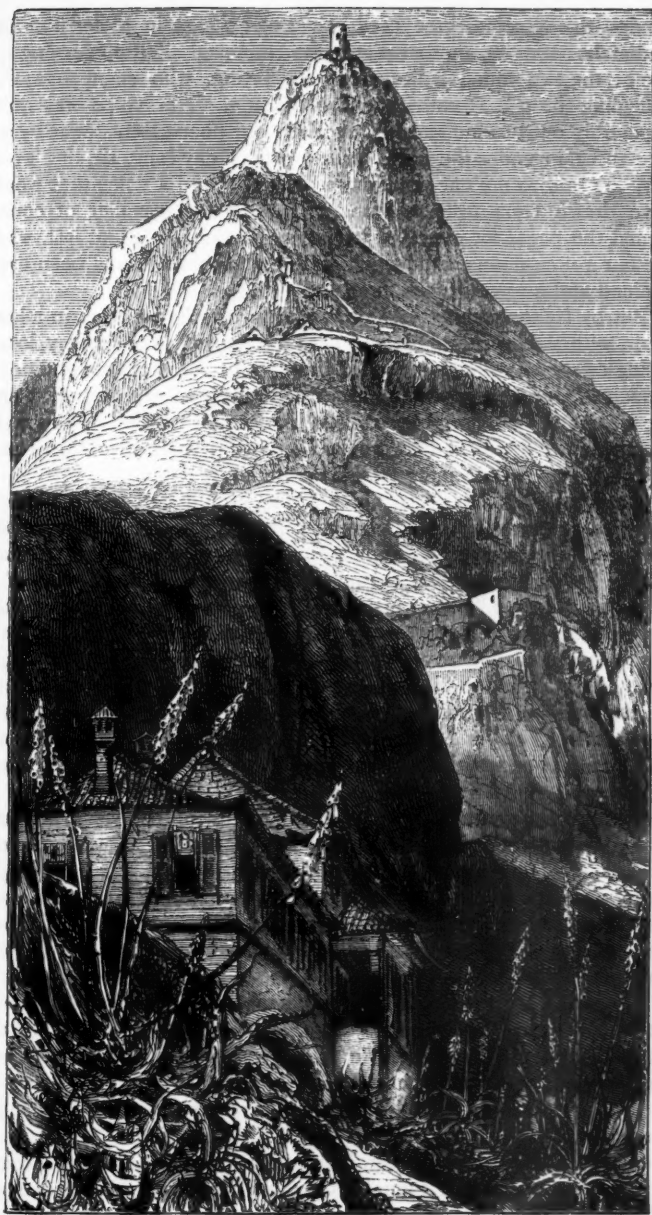
And in this way and after this manner of conversation breakfast dragged its slow length to an end. We had certainly had a good deal of fun, but of a different sort from the pleasures and interest of our own small table.

The judge after breakfast spoke very decidedly upon our having been moved, but obtained no redress, and gave the thing up as hopeless. This I felt would not do. We must have another struggle for victory. I "interviewed" the chief-steward, and after a due representation of the matter, we were once more reinstated in our old and favourite quarters. After this, all went merry as a marriage bell.

The days succeeded each other and brought little change with them. We had the wide blue waste of waters beneath us, the wide blue sky above. Occasionally we caught sight of the African coast; and here and there an ancient town, ruined and hoary looking as if it had existed since the foundation of the world, seemed to rise, phantom-like, from the hills. We passed successively the shores of Morocco, Algeria and Tunis. The ancient town of Bizerta, once belonging to the Arabs, but now, I believe, a French penal settlement, stood out conspicuously under the shelter of its rocky slopes. It, too, might have belonged to the days of Noah. Banishment here must indeed be a death in life.

There cannot be a great variety of occupation at sea, however ingenious the human brain may be at inventing new pleasures. So was it on board the *Batavia*. The days passed under the awnings in a pleasant, dreamy monotony.

One of the great amusements was in throwing rings into a bucket, and if it was not particularly intellectual, it seemed to serve the occasion, for it went on day after day, as regularly as luncheon or dinner. Cricket also went on at the farther end, apparently with great success, considering the limited area of the field. In the saloon the piano was generally tinkling under more or less skilful



O'HARA'S TOWER, GIBRALTAR.

hands—the lesser degree predominating ; whilst in a corridor immediately below us, another piano was employed all the morning by one of the two young ladies given to flirting, who spent hours in struggling through Dorothy and the Mikado. Her voice was quite impossibly out of time and tune. Even our poor cabin-steward grew pale and thin under the daily torture. “All day long, sir, and every day,” he said to me one morning, with a sigh and a voice that would have drawn tears from a stone. Her devoted cavalier of course turned the pages for her ; but even his devotion cooled at last, when the fair prima donna suddenly found that her voice had been overstrained and needed repose.

But by far the pleasantest thing of all was to lie on deck in a long chair, with a favourite book, and pass the hours in that dreamy, lotus-eating existence, which, at certain times and under certain conditions, is such intense pleasure. It was sufficient only to watch the sky and the water ; the intense blue ; the flashing gleams as the ripples caught the sunlight ; the birds that crossed our path ; the horizon only now and then broken by some vessel speeding on her way.

Occasionally, especially at night, a mist would gather and blot out everything : the mist that so often creeps over the waters of the Mediterranean, though, fortunately, so quickly passes. As the moon waxed larger, the nights became more splendid, more full of a “divine effulgence.” The piano was brought on deck, and under the blaze of the electric light, dancing would commence. But somehow, it was never carried on with enthusiasm. Perhaps the electric light was not favourable to flirting and the utterances of those sentimental nothings which lose all their charm under any light but that of the moon ; and at the end of half-an-hour or so, the strains of Faust and the melodies of Waldteufel would languish and finally die away in silence.

Our own evenings were spent with the judge and his daughter, who initiated us into the mysteries of Euchre, an Australian game we had heard much of but never, until now, seen played. The right bower, the left bower, the little joker soon ceased to be mere curious terms : and under the influence of this mild dissipation (we played for love, not money) the hour of 10.30 would often surprise us with unpleasant emotion.

For at 10.30 the electric lights of the saloon were extinguished with a military precision which reflected great credit upon the staff of the vessel, but was not so agreeable to anyone else concerned. If you forgot the time and the light went out, you had to grope your way to your cabin as best you could. Often at 10.29 a flying figure and a fluttering of petticoats passed through the saloon, like Cinderella at the witching hour, as if it feared ghosts in the approaching darkness, or a return to rags and pumpkins. Once in your cabin light again shone upon you ; half-an-hour's grace was allowed here, and darkness only fell at eleven.

At last came Friday morning, and very early on that morning, when most passengers were yet sleeping, we steamed into Malta's fine harbour.

There are in fact two harbours at Malta: the Great Harbour and the Quarantine Harbour; and the P. and O. boats anchor in the latter. Here they coal, and if the reader has never gone through the experience, he can have no idea of its ineffable delights. In a very short time you are covered with a fine, black, sparkling dust; your hands and face assume the complexion of the gentlemen who sweep your chimneys in England—a very lucrative profession, by the way: and every time you open your mouth you swallow so great a quantity, that you soon become a perambulating sack of combustible material.

There are few finer sights than entering Malta harbour, with its forts and fortifications, its grand sweep of water, the general disposition of the land, and its accumulation of white, eastern-looking buildings. The glare from these is often especially trying, for nowhere else does the sun seem to shine with such intense force. The streets are suffocating; the air comes straight upon you as if just wafted from some invisible furnace seven times heated.

No sooner had we dropped anchor, than the usual crowd swarmed on board, with specimens of every curiosity for sale that Malta contained. They were far more persistent than the men of Gibraltar, for here they would not be denied. They came down and down in their prices, until at last, you weakly bought an amount of useless impedimenta for the sake of peace and deliverance. Silver ornaments, coral, Maltese lace, images and animals in sculptured alabaster and marble: all these surrounded you in profusion. Fruit was abundant: the most luscious green figs, most delicious grapes. For a shilling we stocked our cabin with a supply that would have lasted an insatiable appetite for a week. We, who had less than two days for disposing of our bargain, enjoyed an unbroken Bacchanalian feast. Fortunately, it was the unfermented juice of the grape only.

We were only too glad to leave all these persistent merchants, the vessel with its coaling delights, for the less confined pleasures of the shore. But here, as the area was wider, so the temptations would be stronger and more numerous.

We were to have the whole day in Malta—the *Batavia* would sail again at 5 o'clock—and prepared to make the most of our liberty. Minerva was leaving for good, to take possession of her immaculate abode. We watched her go off in company with Miss Lydia Languish. The latter, however, was a passenger for New Zealand, and was only "out for the day," and her chaperon would take care that she did not elope with "the military," and perhaps, like the unfortunate Miss Bailey, come to a bad end.

It was quite a long row to the landing steps, and a very pleasant one under the awning of the boat, which was very picturesque and

seemed a sort of compromise between a modern gondola and an ancient Viking. Our boatman was a young Maltese, with well-shaped head and features, flashing eyes in which one would not care to waken the demon of revenge, and a skin as brown as a coffee berry. He was nearly naked, but the costume of Adam and Eve in Paradise here excites no surprise, and has no demoralising effect. It has also the advantage of economy; whilst no time is lost in superfluous dressing in the morning.

No sooner landed than we were besieged by guides wanting to show us everything that the island contained, and much that it did not contain. On the face of the globe there is no place like Malta for this annoyance. They will not be shaken off, these men. One certain Maltese will constitute himself your guardian and factotum, and in spite of all you can say, will follow you for hours all over the place. If you take a carriage to get out of his way he will run after it, fleet as a lamplighter. You might as well endeavour to escape from your own shadow as from his persistence.

We entered the deep archway, in which sat a blind beggar woman, five centuries old to all appearance. A long, crooked, uphill street leading up from the port to the town, by a succession of shallow steps. In the blazing sun and intense heat it is trying to mount this Jacob's ladder, but it is picturesque. The narrow side streets were full of charm and colouring, with their deep balconies. Some of the women going about look curious and interesting in their black silk cloaks that come below the waist, whilst the immense hood is drawn over the head and partially screens the face from observation. To see a group of them so dressed kneeling in church before a lighted altar is a singular, almost pitiable sight. They look like mourners in the last stage of misery; or weeping penitents being shriven for some mortal sin.

We soon found ourselves in the Strada Reale, the principal street of Valetta. Everything I had seen six years ago, I saw again to-day. Nothing was changed; all the old landmarks were there. The lace-shop of Messrs. P. P. Borg and Co., where we had spent a small fortune, rashly plunging into matters of which we knew little or nothing. And there was Mr. Borg himself at his door, looking not a day older, and more rotund and flourishing than ever. He had evidently continued to prosper. And—oh, miserie—I declare that he recognised me and was hastening across the road, with evidently evil intentions.

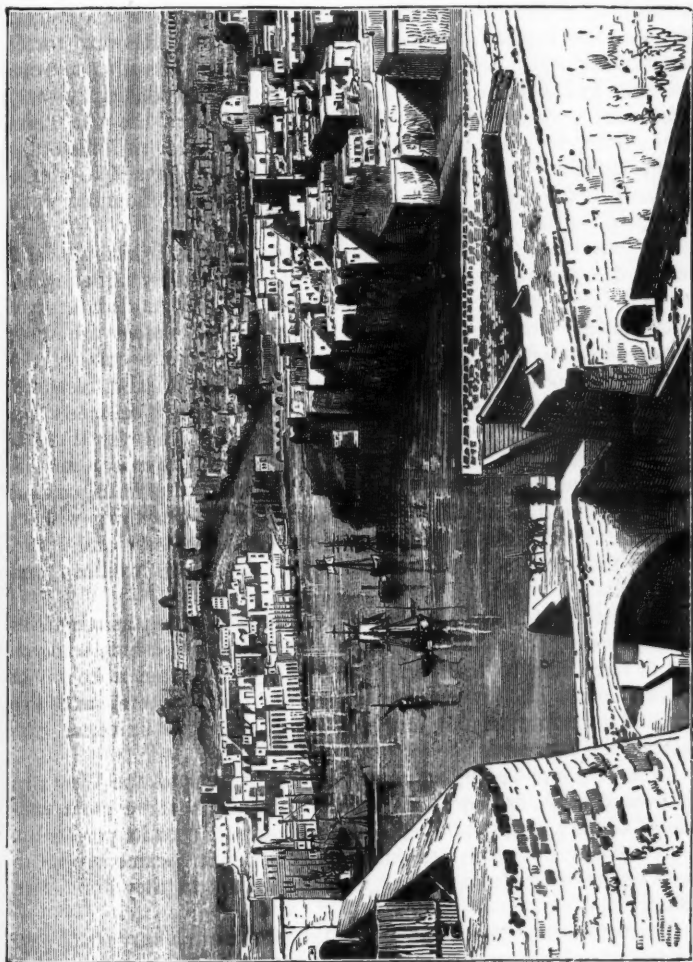
"Delighted to see you in Malta again, sir." (I should think so.) "Pray come in, I have something to show you, something very special."

"Not to day, Mr. Borg; it is quite useless. I have not come to Malta this time to buy lace or anything else."

"No, sir, no. I would not ask you to buy for the world. But come in and see this wonderful production. It is the exact counterpart of what we sent to the Glasgow Exhibition. I should like you to see it before anyone else."

Of course we hesitated, and of course were lost.

But Mauleverer likewise did not escape. He invested in unlimited cigars and cigarettes, bought two large boxes of each upon the assurance of Mr. Borg that we were allowed even more than that through



MALTA.

all the custom-houses in Europe, although we knew perfectly well that it was a — mistake.

The trouble we had in the end. The successful smugglings, but the hair-breadth escapes. The manner in which I wasted away

under the anxiety, and the way in which Mauleverer smoked himself pale and ill day after day to reduce the risk and the quantity. I don't think he will forget it as long as he lives ; I shall never even recover it.

Then further up the street came the Union Club, where we had almost lived at our previous visit. Yet beyond that the Opera House, where we had listened to "Faust," and very nearly forsworn music for ever after. Opposite that again was Truefitt's, which really made one feel quite in London, and brought the Burlington Arcade unpleasantly before one's mental vision. And just beyond was the old Porta Reale, with its statues of the Knights of St. John, and the draw-bridge spanning the great dyke which runs from the Quarantine Harbour to the Great Harbour ; a dyke nearly one thousand yards long, fifty-five feet deep, and thirty feet wide.

For this little island of Malta has gone through histories and vicissitudes, and belonged to many nations. It is simply a rock rising out of the sea, seventeen miles long, nine miles broad, and about sixty miles round. For its size, Valetta, the capital, is almost the most densely populated place in the world. Outside, in the country, the island looks nothing but a barren waste of rock and sand, bleached white and hard under the blazing sun. Hardly a tree meets the eye, or any green, or any sign of vegetation. And yet there is abundance of it, and Malta is really very fertile. The reason for this apparent contradiction is that nearly all vegetation, trees, fruits, cereals, is enclosed and concealed within high walls. Everything without the walls is destroyed by the influence of the sea air and spray. Within these walls vegetation is often singularly luxuriant and beautiful.

The history of Malta dates from very remote days ; as remote as the expulsion of the Phœnicians from Canaan by Joshua, who are said to have been its first known settlers. Then came a colony of Greeks seven hundred years before the Christian era, and five hundred years later it fell into the hands of those universal conquerors, the Romans.

So it went on ; belonging now to the East, now to the West ; as if, situated at almost equal distances between the three great continents of the known world, each and all had a right to its possession.

At last came its most interesting epoch, when it became subject to the Knights of St. John, or Knights Hospitallers as they were often called.

Like many other great results the Order began in a very small way. A band of merchants from Amalfi founded a hospital and chapel at Jerusalem for the use of poor pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre : buildings dedicated to St. John the Baptist. After the capture of Jerusalem by Godefroi de Bouillon in 1099, the Order suddenly became famous. To its pacific attributes it was allowed to add a martial side, and take up arms in defence of its faith : and before many

years had passed, "the white cross banner of the Order of St. John had waved over many a field of strife."

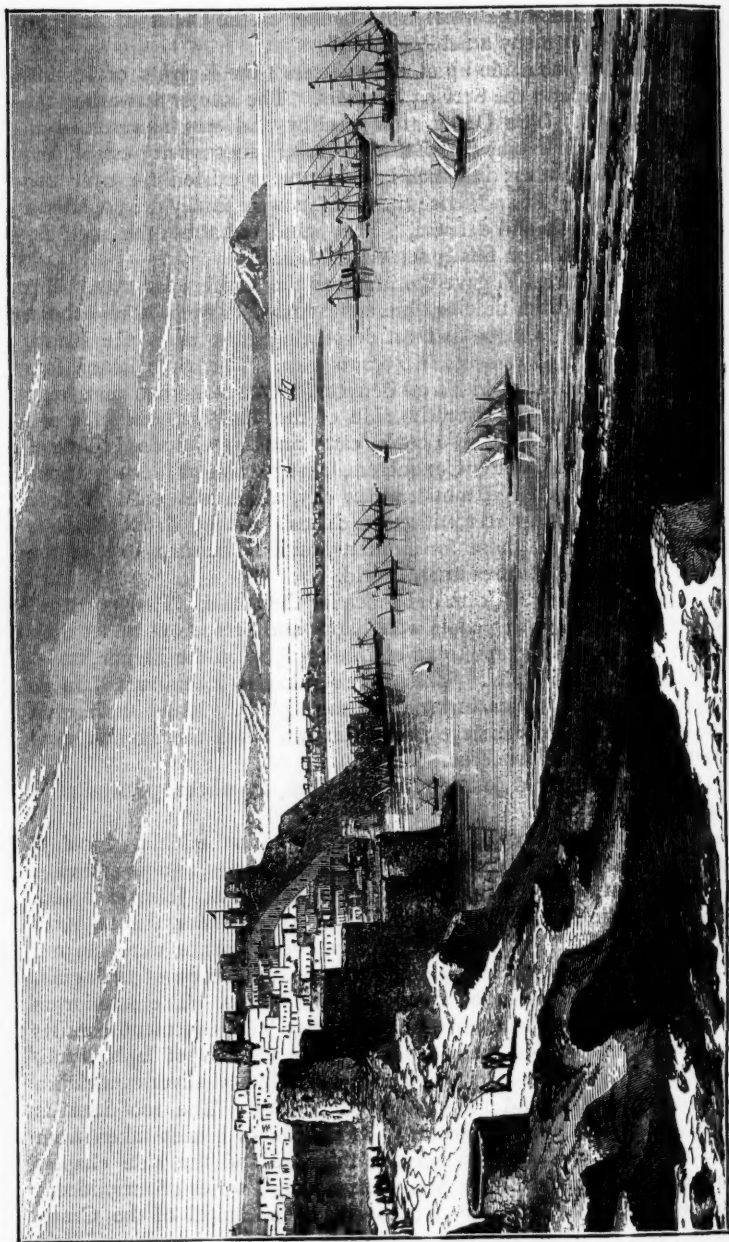
The Order was made up of three classes : the Knights of Justice, the Chaplains, and the Serving Brothers. The Rector was called the Grand Master. The Order grew wealthy and was represented in many of the chief cities of Europe. It was successively established in Acre and Rhodes ; in which latter place it existed for over two hundred years. From thence the Knights were finally driven, after a desperate struggle and defence. They wandered about the world for seven years, and then finally settled at Malta.

In 1530 Charles V. gave the island to the Knights for ever. But other countries from time to time endeavoured to wrest it from them. In 1565 the Porte made its most desperate attack upon the island, with a fleet of 138 vessels and 40,000 men. The siege lasted four months and then they withdrew defeated. Out of 40,000 men only 10,000 remained ; whilst on the side of the Knights, out of 9,000 men, only 600 were left who could carry arms. John de la Valette was the Grand Master. Conquerors, though almost destroyed, he rose to the occasion. He built a new city, which was called Valetta after his own name, and fortified the island. Other Grand Masters after him continued these fortifications, until it became one of the most renowned fortresses in the world.

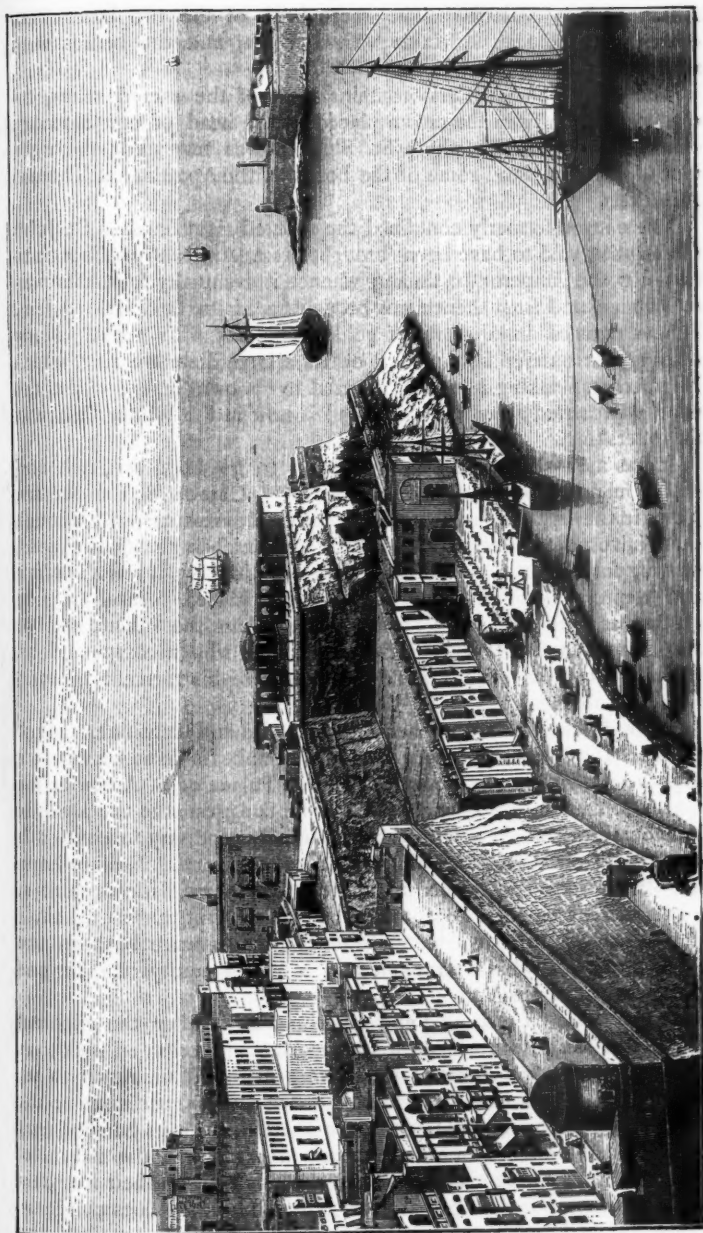
The Knights of St. John did much for the island. They governed wisely and well. The people were happy and prosperous under their reign. This finally came to an end in 1798, when the French, under Bonaparte, seized Malta. Under their rule the inhabitants were so oppressed that at last an insurrection took place. Malta underwent the miseries of another siege ; and after two years the French were starved out and surrendered.

In 1814 the island passed to the English, in whose possession it has remained.

There are few traces of all these vicissitudes in the Malta of to-day, yet one feels their influence. Few ancient buildings, and no churches of any beauty or importance exist, the church of St. John excepted. The foundation stone of this was laid in 1573, under the reign of Grand Master de la Cassière. For many years riches were heaped upon it, people outrivalling each other in the profuseness of their gifts. The exterior is surmounted by the Maltese Cross. The interior is gorgeous with every species of decoration. The pavement consists of costly marbles of many colours. The altar is of lapis lazuli, enriched by gold and silver work. Heavy gold and silver candelabra decorate the altar and suspend from the roof. The roof itself is magnificently painted, displaying a succession of scenes taken from the Scriptures. The pillars between the nave and the side chapels are enriched with gilding. Above these hang a series of magnificent and costly tapestries. The crypt is called the Chapel of the Crucifixion, and twelve of the Grand Masters lie here, including L'Isle



APPROACHING THE HARBOUR, MALTA.



MOUTH OF THE HARBOUR, MALTA

Adam and la Valette. The sarcophagi of the two latter were opened when Queen Adelaide visited Malta, and the bodies were found to be embalmed.

The Chapel of San Carlo contains most of the sacred relics, including a thorn from the crown placed on the head of our Saviour; one of the stones with which St. Stephen was martyred; the right foot of Lazarus; and some of the bones of the Apostles and Thomas A'Beckett.

The church formerly contained the reputed right hand of St. John the Baptist, said to have been brought from Antioch to Constantinople by the Emperor Justinian; whence it eventually found its way to Rhodes, and from thence was brought to Malta by L'Isle Adam. It was encased in a glove of gold, richly set with gems. Many offerings surrounded it: amongst others a large diamond ring, which Napoleon, on taking Malta, transferred to his own finger; whilst the hand was carried away to Russia, and is now in the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg.

It was a strange and abrupt transition to go from this rich and costly building to the poor and very ugly Church of the Monks. Down in the crypt we saw them, these miserable creatures, who, though dead, have never been buried, propped up in niches, ghastly skeletons, wearing for shroud the cloaks they had worn in life. It was a horrible and depressing sight. One of them was placed behind an iron grating, as if he had been more precious than the others, and we asked the reason. It was, said the Brother who accompanied us, because people who came would cut a piece of his garment to carry away as a memento.

We were glad to escape back into pure air and sunshine, though the heat and the intense glare were almost unbearable as we went out into the country to see the garden of the Palace of S. Antonio, the Governor's summer residence, given up for the present to the Duke of Edinburgh. On our way it was occasionally necessary to shut one's eyes from the dazzling and blinding effect of the sun. Neither horse nor driver, however, seemed to feel it. The horse, indeed, went at a tremendous rate and kept it up for hours without turning a hair.

On reaching the residence we entered a long avenue between two high dead walls, which terminated in a paved courtyard. Beyond this was the famous garden.

It was indeed a charming and refreshing sight after the apparent sterility of the island. The garden was large and crowded with trees of every description, some of which were new and unknown to us. Orange and lemon trees were in abundance; a few specimens of the pepper tree; the graceful linden; the kharoub, with its hanging fruit or vegetable—which is it? for it seems to partake of the nature of both. Unseen cicalas apparently in millions kept up their incessant and curious noise. And what puzzled us, and always does puzzle us, is the way in which they all begin chirping and grating together, and

all leave off at the very same instant. One moment the air is full of a sound more or less distracting until you grow used to it ; the next moment complete silence "falls upon the listening ear."

Lower down, steps led to a terrace where was a basin in which gold fish disported. And if fish are to envied at all, surely it is here, where they exist in perpetual cool waters. Immense butterflies—almost as large as one's hand—of the brightest and most gorgeous colours, flew from bush to bush, from flower to flower. Gigantic bushes of flaming geraniums and the more delicate plumbago scattered their beauty and perfume—as did the fruit-laden orange trees. We picked up and eat an orange that lay upon the ground. Although pale and still unripe, its scent and flavour were exquisite, and reminded one of the oranges of Majorca. But in Majorca the trees grow to a much larger size. Here they were all small ; because, said the gardener, they grow too quickly to perfection, and want more soil. Over all was the intense, burning sky, whilst the air seemed literally painted with sunshine.

It was like passing out of Paradise to leave this garden and set out upon our barren drive to Valetta. The garden had been luxuriant and lovely beyond description ; but now not a tree or shrub was to be seen ; not a bird to be heard. Most of the birds in Malta are migratory ; and some make merely a resting place of the island as they journey eastward or westward.

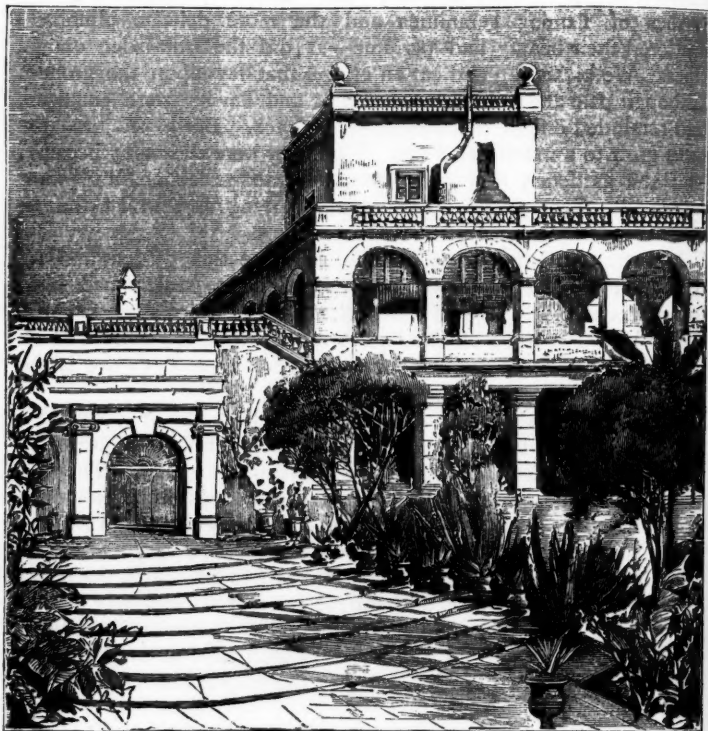
Re-entering Valetta, from the different bastions we obtained a matchless view. Far down lay the harbours, with their impregnable forts, that of St. Angelo standing out conspicuously. The sun flashed upon the waters. Boats with their awnings flitted about in search of prey. Steamers were at anchor ; our own good old *Batavia* still in the agonies of coaling. We could almost fancy we heard the periodical avalanche, see the clouds of dust flying. Cabin doors and port-holes were, of course, all hermetically closed : not only to keep out the dust, but other insidious intruders who occasionally make a mistake, enter, and, seized with a slight obfuscation of intellect, carry away other people's possessions under the impression that they are their own.

At our feet lies the lower part of the town—so far down that you quite shudder as you look into the depths. Peacocks are strutting about in areas so confined that the poor birds have no chance of gratifying their pride and spreading their tails.

Nothing can be more Eastern-looking than the scene. Far away stretch the white houses with their flat roofs. For miles you can trace the Island, barren and rocky. Across there in the distance, the great hospital stands out conspicuously on its sandy height. Far out and around stretches the deep blue sea, always flashing in the sunlight. Round there is St. Paul's Bay, where the Apostle was shipwrecked, and of which he gives so graphic an account in the Acts. A statue was erected here to St. Paul in 1845. It is certain

that this bird's-eye view of Malta from the Bastions is one of the marvellous sights, one of the great panoramas of the world.

The streets were hotter than ever as we rattled through them to the Governor's Palace. Here there is a splendid collection of armour, which seems to represent all the eras and vicissitudes of the island. It is full of wonderful guns, shields and helmets, whilst complete suits of armour once worn by the Knights of St. John stand in rows



PALACE OF SAN ANTONIO.

against the wall, and look something like the skeletons of the old monks in their mouldy crypt.

I once read a story of these old skeletons to the effect that a young fellow accompanying a lady into the crypt thought he would play her a practical joke, and quietly pinned her dress to a skeleton monk's cloak. As she moved away the hideous thing fell forward and its rattling arms enclosed her. But the shock and horror were too much for her and turned her brain. It nearly turned one's brain to read about it. The horror came back to me as I had looked at

them to-day. To have those horrible arms about you would surely be enough to scatter the strongest senses to the winds.

Amongst other relics in the Armoury of the Palace we noticed, carefully guarded under a glass case, the deed, dated March 24th, 1530, by which Charles V. made over the Island of Malta for ever to the Knights of St. John. Nothing, however, lasts for ever. The deed remains, but the knights of successive generations have gone to their last long rest, and the Order has become extinct.

The hours were passing and it was nearly time to return to the *Batavia*. The lazy natives hung about the streets, begging for largesse. Under the Arcades they were lying about in the abandonment of idleness. Little half-dressed boys, bare-legged, bare-footed, ran about trying to sell coins; others thrust flowers upon you which had scarcely half-an-hour's existence left in them. Anything to gain money, and have something to live upon until the next P. and O. boat came into port. Some of these little fellows were singularly handsome, with great dark flashing eyes full of merriment and mischief. It was impossible to resist them. One only regretted that the day would come when, grown to manhood, all their beauty would vanish, all their comparative innocence be left behind with childhood and youth.

The street cries of Malta had hardly begun. Here and there we came upon a water-seller, but he was quiet and depressed: custom seemed to fail him. It is at night that one hears the cries to perfection, up to one o'clock in the morning; and they begin again in full force at three, just as you have fallen into your first sleep. There is no place like Malta for doing penance for your sins. No horse-hair shirts or sheets are needed; you have little chance of rest even if reposing on a bed of roses. It is not a pleasant place to live in. Life becomes dreary and monotonous. I never yet found anyone, naval, military or civil, who did not hate it as a residence, and look upon it as banishment: a sort of penal servitude without the hard labour. But for a short visit, with all its brightness, all its associations, sacred, secular and historical, Malta is extremely interesting.

It had to be left to-day when four o'clock struck. We had settled up with Mr. Borg, who in the largeness of his heart and the excellence of his bargains, served us with some real coffee à la Turc. It was certainly very delicious. Then, followed by his factotum bearing our burden, we retraced our steps down the hilly street, passed under the archway where the blind old woman of five centuries still sat and begged, and easily found a boat at the steps. Again we took our seats under the awning, and were soon making quick way for the *Batavia*. The row upon the water was so pleasant that we wished it might last for hours.

It lasted only a few minutes, and we were once more on board. Coaling was over, but its signs remained. The ship had changed colour and become Ethiopian. On the water, in boats, a small

swarm of brown boys and men were diving for coins. They would not condescend to stir for a penny, but if anyone threw in sixpence they dived deep down after it, and came up with it between their glistening teeth. Sometimes a coin was thrown down the other side the vessel. Away they splashed, a dozen of them, dived right under the ship, and one was sure to come up on the other side with the sixpence in his mouth. In this way they made quite a small harvest.

But five o'clock struck, and with the last stroke the *Batavia*, punctual as ever, was in motion. We steamed out of the magnificent harbour between the forts, as much impressed as ever with their grandeur. Malta fell away. Once more we were ploughing the blue waters of the Mediterranean. Presently night fell, and the moon rose, and the stars came out, "proclaiming to the listening earth, the wondrous story of their birth."



AN EVENING PRIMROSE.

CALM Evening hushed the voices of the day,
 And sang her lullabies from sea to sea,
 Soothing the clamour of unrest away ;
 "Peace, peace!" she softly murmured unto me.
 For ears attent she tender whispers gave
 In wafted odours and in fitful breeze ;
 For he that hath—of heaven more shall have,
 Who grasps a gift a further prize shall seize.
 Within her hand a fragrant bloom was borne,
 White and diaphanous and pure as snow,
 Our faith's rude symbol at her heart was worn,
 The fairest she of all the flowers that blow!
 She spake in fragrance. Brief her hours and few,
 She must be gone ere yet the day may break,
 Her speech distilled amid the evening dew,—
 I tarried in the gloaming for her sake.
 One bud, by calyx clasped like hands in prayer,
 Waited the call her glories to disclose ;
 When eve again stepped down her sunset stair,
 The earth should hail another fragrant rose.
 And thus hath morn and eve and sultry noon
 A voice and symbol, every hour its sign.
 Oh, to be learners of heaven's lavish boon,
 Discerners of the speech which is divine !

CLARA THWAITES.

WAS IT A GHOST ?

"OH, don't let us talk of ghosts any more," said our hostess. "I have no patience with them. Idiotic beings! Wandering about at unseasonable hours, frightening inoffensive people out of their wits. I never yet heard of a ghost who was of use to anyone, or who had any good reason to show for its appearance."

Everyone laughed except one person, and she, like Viola in "Twelfth Night," said: "Ah! but I know—" and then, like Viola, paused. No one heard her except myself.

Mrs. Lester's remark seemed suddenly to have put to flight the "eerie" mood which a succession of ghost stories had encouraged in us. The circle round the tea-table broke up, and one after another sauntered from the drawing-room, till at last there remained only myself and another. The lights had not yet been brought in, and I could only see her face by the glow of the fire.

"Now, Mrs. Mantell," I said, carrying a chair up to take my place beside her. "Tell me what you know."

"About what?"

"About ghosts."

"Oh," said Mrs. Mantell, remembering her words, and recognising my meaning with a slight start and a blush. "I don't know that it would interest you."

"It would interest me intensely."

"And besides," she continued, "I am not sure that it was a ghost."

"Never mind; let me judge for myself."

For, indeed, I was less concerned about the ghost than about Mrs. Mantell herself. Most old maids have their hobbies; mine is an affection for romances—romances in real life, I mean. I love them, and I look for them as other people do for bric-a-brac, antique coins or foreign postage stamps, and in the course of the last twenty years, I have amassed a very pretty collection. Already, I divined one in the presence of Mrs. Mantell, not merely from the mingled sweetness and sensitiveness of her expression, but from a few words which, on the day of her arrival, had fallen from our hostess.

"Mr. Mantell is our friend," Mrs. Lester had explained. "I have not yet seen *her*. She was his mother's governess or companion, I forget which, and she had rather a romantic story. She was brought up in a most extravagant style, and then her father died bankrupt, and left her without a penny."

"Do begin, Mrs. Mantell," I pleaded. "The dressing-bell will ring in a few minutes."

She yielded, as I hoped she would; as most human beings do to my flattering, eager interest in them and their experiences.

"I must begin a long way back; three years before the ghost appears. We were then living in Downshire, and we were going to Lechester Races. We generally drove there, but this year we had too large a party for the drag, so it was decided that my cousin Caroline and myself, escorted by my cousin Tom, should go by train. Caroline, I remember, was furious, at the arrangement, which she thought much beneath her dignity and likely to injure the freshness of her toilette. I, on the contrary, thought it would be as Tom suggested, great fun. There was, as we expected, a great crush at the station, and, to make matters worse, we arrived only just before the train started. In fact, it would have started without us, if Tom, to Caroline's indignation, had not thrust us unceremoniously into a third-class carriage.

"Well, I'm not going to lose the first race for your stuck-up notions," said Tom, with cousinly frankness. "It's only for half-an-hour, and it won't do you any harm."

I looked round rather nervously, feeling that Caroline's objections were highly discourteous to our fellow passengers. There were seven of them. Four very horsey-looking men loudly discussing the races; a soldier in a scarlet uniform; a young man and maiden in their Sunday array; and a woman with a baby on her lap, on the seat opposite to mine. She glanced up at me as I took my place, showing me as she did so two of the saddest eyes I have ever seen in any human face. They moved me to look at her more attentively. She was a middle-aged woman, poorly but not untidily dressed. I remember she wore a rusty black shawl over her shoulders, and that the baby was wrapped in a coarse grey one. Her face, like her hand which clasped the child, seemed worn to the bone with waste, or care, or suffering; or it might be all three. Her mouth, like her eyes, was sad and uncomplainingly sweet. My spirits, which had been bubbling joyously all day, began to subside. I was glad that a dust-cloak of sombre hue covered from neck to hem the gay dress I wore, and that no one could see the three gold coins jingling loosely in my pocket which my father had given me to spend on sweepstakes. I began to wonder sadly how life felt to those who lived in the shadow instead of the sunshine. Suddenly the baby awoke and began to cry. The mother changed its position and strove to hush it, but the baby only wailed the louder. Everyone in the carriage looked impatiently towards her, and Caroline audibly remarked that babies ought not to be allowed to travel. The poor woman, as she shifted the child from one arm to another, with a weary sigh, looked round upon us for a moment as if mutely entreating our forgiveness for an annoyance she could not prevent.

"Let me take the baby for a little," I said.

I was not experienced in nursing, and had little hope of quieting the child, but I longed to relieve the mother's tired arms and to atone for what seemed to me the ungraciousness of the others.

"Why, Mabel, are you crazy!" exclaimed Caroline. Tom stared at me with mingled wonder and amusement, and even the poor mother looked as if she had not heard aright; but I lent forward and took the baby gently from her. By a fortunate chance the child left off crying almost immediately I had it in my arms. It caught sight of a gold ornament I wore, and clutching it in its tiny fists, became absorbed in examining it for the remainder of the journey. Caroline gradually left off sneering, and the others left off staring at me. Only the woman's sad eyes rested on me with a look of admiring awe which made me feel quite ashamed.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

Then she leant forward and told me her story. It was a very sad one. She was a soldier's wife and had followed her husband to India and back. On the way home she had lost three little children. This one, only eight weeks old, was very weakly. She was going down to stay with her mother to see if the pure country air would do it good.

"You will be glad to get into the country, won't you?"

"Yes," she said wistfully. "But I was sorry to leave my husband."

I had read and heard often enough the most graphic descriptions of poverty and its trials, but I had never felt what it was till that morning when I sat with the poor pale-faced baby in my arms and listened to its mother's voice, low and pathetic, but without a tinge of discontent in its tone. As we reached Lechester I put the baby back in her arms and then slid my hand furtively into my pocket. I did not wish Tom or Caroline to see what I was doing, so I waited till the last moment; then suddenly drew my money out, thrust it into the woman's hand, and jumped on to the platform before she had time to discover what I had given her.

The crowd at this station was greater than ever. Tom had literally to fight a way out for himself and us, and as at one moment we stood, blocked near the exit, I turned to see the train glide from the station. The poor woman with her baby was at the window, watching apparently for me; for, as our eyes met she started and put out her head as if she would have spoken. I could not have heard her if she did; nor did it much matter, for her words would hardly have been as eloquent as her eyes. They seemed, as they met my own, almost to burn with intensity of feeling. There was something solemn in that look. I felt as if the woman were praying for me, and inwardly registering a solemn vow that at some time she would repay me for my help. Then the train swept on, and I saw her no more.

It so happened that I never went to Lechester by train again till three years later ; and then alas ! under very different circumstances. My father had died leaving me penniless. I had no mother, no relations and, it then appeared, no friends ; except, indeed, Mr. and Mrs. Barton our clergyman and his wife. They most kindly insisted on my making my home with them till such time as I could find some means of earning my bread. How difficult that was you can hardly imagine if you have never tried to find paid employment for a woman who has been brought up only to be a lady. I could do several things a little ; nothing as well as the people with whom I had to compete.

One day, fairly out of heart, I sat half weeping, alone, by the drawing-room fire, when Eliza, the parlourmaid came in with some tea for me. She looked wistfully at me as she put down the tray, and said : "I beg your pardon, miss, but I heard yesterday that Mrs. Mantell at Lechester wanted a nursery-governess for her two little grandchildren. I don't know as that sort of place would be good enough for you, but if it was, you'd be very happy there, for Mrs. Mantell is such a kind, nice lady. I was housemaid there before I come here. She was such a good lady ; anybody couldn't help liking her !"

"I should be too glad to get such a place," I said. "And I will try and go to Lechester to-morrow. How shall I get to the station, I wonder?" For it was six miles off, and Mr. and Mrs. Barton kept no carriage. Eliza timidly suggested that Farmer Edwards would be going into Lechester next day by an afternoon train, and would give me a lift to and from the station, if I would accept it.

"And where does Mrs. Mantell live, Eliza?" was my last question. "I don't know, miss, exactly. She's changed her address since I lived with her, but you can easily find out, you know. She's the doctor's wife. Anyone will tell you where Doctor Mantell lives."

Accordingly next day I went to Lechester. The whole way there I could not refrain from mournfully contrasting my present and my last journey. The one point of resemblance was that on both occasions I travelled in a third-class carriage. Otherwise the difference was complete and depressing between that glowing June morning and this moody November afternoon ; between the crowds of pleasure-seekers who then thronged the stations and their dull work-a-day aspect to-day ; above all between my then smiling future and my now over-clouded fate. If only the sun would have come out, I thought, I could have felt more hopeful ; but not a gleam played on the tall cathedral-spire, or the scattered roofs and gardens of Lechester as we steamed in.

I walked slowly from the station to the more inhabited part of the town and entered the first chemist's shop I saw. "Will you please tell me," I asked the man behind the counter, "where Doctor Mantell lives?"

"Which Doctor Mantell, madam?" was his most unexpected and disconcerting answer.

"Is there more than one Doctor Mantell?"

"Yes, madam; there are two cousins. Doctor George Mantell, who lives in Church Street, and Doctor Leigh Mantell, who lives in St. Anne's Place."

"Do you happen to know which Mrs. Mantell is in want of a nursery governess?"

"They are both looking out for nursery governesses, I think, madam."

I was evidently in ill-luck that day. What was I to do? I was especially anxious to find the Mrs. Mantell of whom Eliza had said such pleasant things, but how was I to find her? How could I go to either lady's house, ask if she was the person who had been so kind to Eliza, and then take my leave if she said she was not? Besides, I did not know what Eliza's surname was. Above all, there was not much time wherein to make experiments. In an hour and a half my train would start.

I thanked the man, left the shop and went slowly along, wondering if I must really return without fulfilling my errand, wasting thus a whole afternoon, and the still more precious money which my journey would cost me.

An impulse made me suddenly look up, and I saw standing at the other side of the street a woman, with a baby in her arms, a poor woman in a shabby black shawl. I recognised an instant afterwards that it was the poor woman I had travelled with in the train three years ago. The same sad eyes were looking intently at me now, as if she had something to say to me. I crossed the street to speak to her, but directly I began to move towards her, she turned and began to walk on. I quickened my pace to make up to her, but without success. I went faster and faster till I was almost running, but the faster I went, the faster too did she go; though, strange to say, without running. She seemed to glide very fleetly but very quietly along. At length the astonished looks of the people I was passing reminded me of the remarkable pace I was going at. I slackened my steps, and then, rather provoked, determined to give up the chase. But as I paused the woman paused also, and turning round, beckoned to me with an imploring look in her dark, sad eyes.

It was evident she wanted me to follow her for some unimaginable reason, and did not wish me to walk with her; so, impelled now by curiosity as well as interest, I tacitly submitted to this arrangement. The woman led the way at a moderate pace, and I followed about twenty yards behind. We turned several corners and at last entered what I supposed must, from its outward aspect, be one of the most fashionable streets in the place. This was not the kind of locality into which I expected my humble acquaintance to lead me. "Who

and what can she be ? " I asked myself. I saw a sister of charity coming towards me at this moment, and it occurred to me that she might in all probability be able to answer my question.

" Can you tell me, if you please, " I said at once, " who that poor woman is—that poor woman with the baby ? "

The sister stopped, turned round, and looked in the direction towards which I pointed ; then turning towards me with a puzzled expression said :

" What woman ? What baby ? "

How could she ask such a question ? I gazed at her bewildered. There was only one woman, such as I described, to be seen. In fact, no other human being of either sex or any age was then visible on that side of the street.

" Don't you see her ? " I repeated incredulously, pointing again towards the woman, who had stopped : " standing at the door of that big house ? "

" I see no one, " said the sister.

I bid her good-morning, concluding that she was not quite right in her mind ; and I fancy from her expression that I left her with the same impression of myself.

My strange guide moved on and I followed her ; but just as I reached the big house I had spoken of she disappeared ; or rather, as Mrs. Molesworth says in one of her ghost stories, she " was not there. " It gave me the most extraordinary feeling I have ever had. I stared and rubbed my eyes for a little, and then I began to wonder if I really had seen a ghost. I turned to give a hopeless glance behind me, and as I did so I saw a name on the brass plate of the door before which I was standing. It was " Dr. George Mantell. "

" I hope you rang the bell at once, " I exclaimed.

" I did : the coincidence was too remarkable. I determined to see if my ghost had led me there on purpose. "

" Well, and was it the right Mrs. Mantell ? "

" It was, indeed, the right Mrs. Mantell, " she answered fervently. " The best and kindest of women ! My mistress first, and then my mother. And you know, " she added, glancing rather shyly at me, " I met my husband there. "

I have seen a great deal of the darker side of married life, so I was not impressed by this information quite in the way she expected me to be.

" But the woman and the child ? " I asked. " Did you ever hear more of them ? "

" Yes, " replied Mrs. Mantell. " Before leaving the train that day, when telling me her story, she had told me her name and her mother's name and address. I was so puzzled by what I had seen that I wrote to inquire about her. Both mother and child were dead : had been dead about three months—the child of convulsions, the mother of decline, hastened by grief and trouble. "

"And do you doubt that you saw a ghost?"

"I have my own opinion," she replied; "but I generally keep it to myself. The world is sceptical in such matters. You, I see, have formed yours."

I looked thoughtfully at her, and was just about to ask if she considered that on the whole this singular phantom had been to her a messenger of good, when the door opened, and her husband, who had been out shooting with the other men, entered the room. So I said nothing, but slipped away to the centre-table, where I fingered some books and watched. He went up to her at once, and laid his hand for a moment lightly on her shoulder.

"Well?" he said, looking down at her.

"Well?" she answered, looking up at him.

I could only hear his voice, I could only see her face, and yet I knew in an instant that the ghost had made no mistake.

TRUE LOVE.

IN this sweet summer, love of mine,
When all the garden's gay,
And any man may garlands twine
Since flowers for that dear head of thine
Grow thick by every way—
I can but do what others do,
They do no less than I—
I twine and bring my garland too—
Love and despair, and rose and rue—
That thou mayst throw them by

But when cold winds blow by and by
And all the garden's sere,
Not other men, but I—but I—
Shall seek where hidden violets lie,
And pluck them for thee, dear!
Not they, but I, shall serve thee best
When summer's leaves are shed;
I shall bring flowers of love and rest,
And thou shalt wear them in thy breast,
When all *their* flowers are dead.

E. NESBIT.

DREAMS WHICH ARE NOT ALL DREAMS.

IN a previous paper: "The Stuff that Dreams are made of," we gave some account of the physical causes which occasionally excite portentous dreams, and showed that the superstitions which attribute "ill-luck" to certain visions of the night have been founded by experience on a certain amount of scientific basis.

We shall now go on to narrate other instances, in which, however a dream may have been excited, it has produced a definite result, or has been so aptly wrought into the history of the dreamer as to become a powerful factor either in working out circumstances vital to himself or to others associated with him; or else, in tendering fore-warning or explanation of such circumstances.

We will begin with a group of dreams which we may call mental dreams; because, from whatever cause, the mind of the sleeper is set a-working in its customary grooves, and a result remains after the dream has passed away.

We will first cite the case of the celebrated Paduan musician Tartini, who died in the year 1770. One night he dreamed that he had an interview with the Archfiend, who made a compact with him, by which—reversing the usual order of such compacts—the devil entered into the service of the musician. To test the musical abilities of his weird attendant, Tartini handed him his violin, and bade him perform a solo. The Evil Spirit obeyed, and performed so admirably that Tartini awoke in immense excitement, the music still ringing in his ears! He endeavoured to repeat it; and though he declared his efforts fell far short of the original performance, yet they resulted in one of the most admired of his pieces; which, in recognition of its source, he called "The Devil's Sonata."

Our English poet, S. T. Coleridge, tells a similar story of himself. When a young man of about twenty-five, he was taking holiday in Somersetshire and had been prescribed an anodyne for some slight indisposition. Afterwards, sitting in his chair, reading a book of travels, he fell asleep. The last words he remembered were, "Here the Kubla Khan commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto: and thus ten miles of fertile ground were enclosed with a wall." From this point the poet's mind seems to have gone on. He slept for about three hours, during which time he himself says that he had the most vivid confidence that he composed from two to three hundred lines. On waking, he seemed to remember the whole and began eagerly to write, but was unfortunately interrupted by a caller. When again at liberty, all had vanished from memory, except what he had already noted down—a fragment of

about fifty lines, with whose misty beauty and strange phantasmagoria we are all more or less familiar.

Dr. Abercrombie relates the following anecdote, which he says is preserved in a family of rank in Scotland, the descendants of the distinguished lawyer who is its hero. This gentleman had been consulted respecting a case of great legal importance and complexity. He had been considering this case with great anxiety and interest for several days, when one night, long after retiring to rest, his wife noticed him rise from his bed, go to his desk and write a long letter, which he then carefully put aside and returned to his couch. She, drowsy herself, instinctively did not interrupt him by any observation. Next morning he told his wife he had had a most interesting dream ; "that he had dreamed of delivering a clear and luminous opinion respecting a case which had exceedingly perplexed him, and that he would give anything to recover the train of thought which had passed before him in his dream." She bade him look in his desk, where he found the manuscript he had written ; and the views he had therein expressed were proved afterwards to be perfectly correct.

Concerning this dream there is a scientific suggestion—to wit—that the lawyer was actually awake when he arose from the bed and wrote—and that in the morning he mistook the circumstance for a dream ! We have all known something of this in our own experience, especially in times of great nervous strain or fatigue, when on awakening for the first time after some great blow or shock, we have asked ourselves for a moment whether it was but a dream, or a terrible reality. One such instance is adduced by the psychological authorities where a gentleman went to bed after an exciting day, and thought next morning he had dreamed of a fire just outside his house. Speaking of his dream, his wife informed him that it was a reality, "that he had got up to the window, looked at the fire, conversed with her concerning it, and that he was at the time fully awake."

There is a well-authenticated story of a gentleman who, in his youth, had made considerable progress in the Greek language, which study had been so interrupted by the circumstances of his later life, that he entirely forgot all he had learned, and could not even read Greek words. Yet, in his dreams, he read Greek works, which he had been accustomed to use at college, and had a most vivid impression of fully understanding them.

It has been said that the idea of the "*Divina Commedia*" came to Dante in his slumbers. Galen, the Greek physician, one of the fathers of the healing art and a friend of the good Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, declared that he owed a great part of his knowledge to revelations made to him in dreams. Condillac, a distinguished French metaphysician of last century, asserted "that often during the course of his studies he had to leave them unfinished in order to sleep, and that on awaking he had more than once found the work upon which he was engaged brought to a conclusion in his

brain." Jerome Cardan, a celebrated Italian physician of the sixteenth century, believed that he composed books while asleep. Dr. Franklin and Dr. Gregory, respectively believed also that they solved difficult political problems, or obtained important scientific ideas, in dreams. The writer of this article remembers that when a girl, in a somewhat overworked and nervous condition, she was in much anxiety as to the plot of a little story she had been asked to write for a periodical. Utterly tired out with worrying herself, she fell asleep at mid day, and awoke with a clear conception of the plan and moral of the trifling tale she had to tell. The experience has never been repeated.

One high authority on matters of the mind is inclined to think that while "the imagination may, in its flights during sleep, strike upon fancies which are subsequently developed by the reason 'into lucid and valuable ideas,' yet that during sleep the power of bringing the judgment into action is suspended."

He adduces the case of a lady who "dreamed she was the Italian reformer Savonarola, and that she was preaching to a vast assembly in Florence. Among the audience was a lady whom she at once recognised to be her own self! As Savonarola, she was delighted at this discovery, feeling that she was well acquainted with all this person's peculiarities and faults of character, and would therefore be able to give special emphasis to them in the sermon. She did this so very effectively that she saw the image of herself burst into a torrent of tears, and, with the emotion thus excited, the dreamer awoke. It was some time before she was able to disentangle her mixed-up individualities. When she became fully awake, she perceived that the arguments she had employed to bring about the conversion of herself were puerile in the extreme, and were directed against characteristics which formed no part of her mental organisation, and against offences which she had not committed." We must say that this story cannot be regarded as scientifically told, while there are no details of the "puerile" arguments, and no opinion except that of the lady herself as to her peculiarities and shortcomings. It may be that in her dream she enjoyed a share of that rare gift of "seeing ourselves as others see us," which is vouchsafed to the waking hours of very few indeed!

A better illustration is found in Dr. Samuel Johnson's dream of a contest of wit in which he was engaged, and in which, greatly to his dream-mortification, he was worsted by his interlocutor. His subsequent shrewd comment was, "One may mark here the effect of sleep in weakening the power of reflection: for, had not my judgment failed me, I should have seen that the wit of this supposed antagonist, by whose superiority I felt myself depressed, was as much furnished by me as that which I thought I had been uttering in my own character."

But there is another instance, by no means recondite, of the prac-

tical power asserted by preconceived idea upon the sleeping condition.

"It is well-known that many persons having made up their minds to awake at a certain hour, invariably do so." Dr. Hammond, the American psychologist, in stating this fact, adds: "I possess this power in a high degree, and scarcely ever vary a minute from the fixed time. Just as I go to bed, I look at my watch, and impress upon my mind the figures on the dial which represent the hour and minute at which I wish to awake. I give myself no further anxiety on the subject, and never dream of it, but I always wake at the desired moment."

The present writer has a share of the same capacity. She never goes through the ritual of looking at her watch, etc., but simply realises that there is reason to be astir by such a time. Having a habit of "taking time by the forelock," she does so in her sleep, always awaking in *good time* to make all arrangements for the appointed duty. She has no dream on the subject, sleeps as soundly as usual, and awakes suddenly, as if called, and for a moment often wonders what is about to happen. She had one maid-servant who had this power in a very marked degree.

We shall close this paper with two interesting and picturesque instances of the power of preconceived ideas so to work themselves out in dreams as to exercise a real influence on material circumstance.

The first is related by the famous Abercrombie, on the authority of Sir Walter Scott.

A Mr. Rowland, a gentleman of landed property on the Border of Scotland, was prosecuted for arrears of tithe alleged to be due to the representative of a neighbouring noble family. Mr. Rowland felt morally sure that his father, by a recognised process of Scottish law, had bought up these tithes, in which case the prosecution was absolutely groundless. But the most diligent search and inquiry among the public records, his father's papers and legal adviser's, failed to bring to light any evidence of such purchase. Mr. Rowland therefore regarded his cause as lost, and purposed to go to Edinburgh and make the best compromise possible. The night before this contemplated journey, he went to bed with his mind full of the case and his own apparently groundless convictions concerning it. He had a dream of his father, to whom he explained the cause of his distress. The father assured him that his belief was quite correct, that the tithes had been bought up, and that the papers were in the hands of a certain aged and retired lawyer, whom he had never employed save on that one occasion. He advised his son to seek out this gentleman at once, and in case the matter had faded from remembrance to revive his memory by recalling that in the settlement of accounts there had been some difficulty in getting change for a Portuguese gold coin, and they had been obliged to drink out the balance at a tavern.

When Mr. Rowland awoke in the morning, he resolved, before going to Edinburgh, to pay a visit to the old lawyer, whom he found in the village indicated. Ushered into his presence, he, without mentioning the dream, inquired whether he had ever conducted such a business for his deceased father. The old gentleman's recollection was at first very confused, but the story of the Portuguese gold piece revived his remembrance; he looked out the papers and found them, and Mr. Rowland proceeded to Edinburgh and triumphantly defeated his prosecutors.

The other story was related to Dr. Hammond by a personal friend, a lawyer, who was interested in a case wherein the exact age of a cousin of his own was an important feature. It could not be ascertained from any living person. The grandfather of both the gentlemen had taken a great deal of notice of them in their boyhood, and the lawyer often remarked that if he were alive there would be no difficulty about the desired date—that he felt sure he had somewhere seen a record of it in the old gentleman's handwriting, but he could not recollect where. Several months elapsed, and he had given up the search in despair, when he had a dream in which his grandfather came to him, saying :

"You have been trying to find out when James was born ; don't you recollect that one afternoon when we were fishing I read you some lines from an Elzevir Horace, and showed you how I had made a family record out of the work by inserting a number of blank leaves at the end ? Now, as you know, I devised my books to the Rev. Mr. (Smith), and I was a precious fool for giving him books which he will never read ! Get the Horace, and you will discover the exact hour at which James was born."

Next morning the lawyer took the first train to visit the reverend gentleman, who lived in a neighbouring city. In his library he found the Horace, the family record and the entry, exactly as described in the dream. By no effort of his memory, however, could he recollect the incidents of the fishing excursion alluded to.

Scientists consider that both these dreams originate in memories, dormant amid the mental effort and distraction of wakefulness, and asserting themselves in the peace of slumber. In support of this view, it may be observed that in neither case were the facts brought forth beyond the cognizance of the dreamers. It is only likely that Mr. Rowland had had some real basis for his strong conviction regarding the purchase of the tithes. As a heedless boy, he may have overheard the name and address of his father's adviser, and the incident of the Portuguese gold piece. In the other case—that of the lawyer—the personage imaged in the dream makes a distinct appeal to a latent recollection of the dreamer, and, though it failed to revive to his waking consciousness, there is little reason to doubt its existence, since all the other impressions of the dream were proved correct.

JACK'S NIECE.

A CAB drew up in front of the officers' quarters in Overbridge Barracks one cold December evening, and a young lady leant out of the window and spoke to a man standing near.

"Does Captain Kerr live here?" she asked.

"Yes, miss," answered the man; "and I'm his servant. But the Captain's at mess just now."

"Oh, dear! how unfortunate. I suppose I must come in and wait. Please have my boxes taken in and pay the cab."

This being done, Private Jones, looking somewhat surprised, notwithstanding his natural stolidity, ushered the visitor into his master's sitting-room, poked the fire and said:

"Shall I let the Captain know you're here, miss?"

"When does he come back from mess, generally?"

"He'll be back early to-night, miss, for he bid me keep up a good fire, as he was coming to write letters after dinner."

"Then I will wait." And taking off gloves, hat and jacket, the girl drew a comfortable-looking arm-chair near the fire and sat down—presently falling into a gentle slumber; the result, no doubt, of the warmth after the cold air outside.

When Jack Kerr returned from mess, at a comparatively early hour, he was surprised to find the passage he shared with several brother-officers blocked up with trunks, and he wondered "which of the fellows" they could possibly belong to.

"Whose are these, Jones?" he asked, seeing his servant standing near.

"The young lady's, sir." And noticing his master's inquiring look, added: "The young lady in your room, sir."

"The *what*——? What do you mean? Young lady in *my* room? What are you talking about?" And without waiting for any answer, Captain Kerr pushed open his door, and there——

He could scarcely believe his eyes. In front of the fire sat a girl of eighteen or thereabouts, asleep in his arm-chair; two tiny feet in a dainty pair of buttoned boots reposed on the fender, and altogether she had the air of being thoroughly at home. Jack's eyes opened, his jaw fell, and all he could say was: "Good gracious! why——"

At this the sleeper awoke, and catching sight of the new-comer, jumped up and exclaimed:

"Here I am, Uncle Jack! Are you not surprised to see me?" Then, seeing his look of blank astonishment, added: "I'm your niece, Daisy; your sister Mary's daughter."

"My sister Mary's daughter!" repeated Jack, still feeling very much at sea.

"Yes; mamma said she would write to you, but I suppose she has not done so yet. She is always putting off things!"

"I have not heard from my sister for years," said Jack, still looking bewildered.

"No. I call it quite shameful the way mamma has dropped out of sight of all her people! But, you see, papa has been such a rolling stone ever since we went to America——"

"America! Why it was to Australia Mary went."

"Oh, Uncle Jack, we've been in America for years, and I certainly thought mamma had written to you since then. I see I shall have to give you all the family history. Papa found he could not get on well in Australia, and, hearing of an opening in California, we—that is he, mamma, the boys and me—all migrated there. After that we stayed in several places; and now papa has at last found a very good berth in New York."

"And where have you come from now, and how did you find me?"

"Well, you see, I had never been in England; and last year a great friend of mine, Alice Lee, married an Englishman, Mr. Dene, and came over. A short time ago she wrote and begged me to come and pay her a visit, and after a great deal of persuasion, papa and mamma let me do so. Mr. and Mrs. Carter were coming in the *Ocean Queen*, and took charge of me on the voyage. Alice was to meet me at Liverpool. But when we got there, I found a letter from her saying Mr. Dene's father was dying and they had been telegraphed for. So as they could not meet me, I was to go straight to Feltham Park and stay till they returned. I just hated the idea of that, and thought I wouldn't go if I could help it. While thinking what to do, I happened to see in a newspaper that the 50th Regiment was at Overbridge, and, as I knew mamma's brother was in that regiment, I said to myself, 'I'll go and look up Uncle Jack.' At first the Carters rather objected and said I ought to go to Feltham and write to you from there; but I felt it would be such a waste of time and so dreary in a strange place alone, so I came straight here. The Carters had to pass Overbridge on their way to London, and I came with them so far. And here I am, and I hope you're glad to see me, Uncle Jack?"

Poor Jack's puzzled countenance certainly did not express much joy. It is rather trying to have a niece, whose existence has hitherto been unknown to one, suddenly come up and plant herself on one's hands in such a summary fashion. Very embarrassing to a bachelor officer living in quarters; and this Jack felt most decidedly.

Daisy watched his face anxiously and then exclaimed: "Don't say you're not pleased to see me, Uncle Jack. Do you know you're ever so much younger and nicer-looking than I expected, and I felt as soon as I saw you that I should have a happy time with you."

Good-natured Jack Kerr was not proof against this piece of flattery from a very pretty girl, whether she might chance to be his niece or no; so he smiled and said: "Well, you see, Daisy, it's rather awkward, because, to tell the truth, I don't know what to do with you. You can't stay here."

"Oh, why not, Uncle Jack? It would be such fun."

"Impossible! Why, I've only two rooms, and this is the bachelor officers' quarters. No lady *could* stay here. So we must think of some place to take you to, at once. It is very late to go to an hotel, and I don't like the idea of your being at one alone—and—and—Well, this is the rummest go!" Jack murmured ruefully to himself, "and I *don't* know what to do." He certainly looked the very picture of embarrassment.

Daisy also looked grave. "I'm afraid I've been very foolish, and am giving you no end of trouble. Perhaps I ought not to have come? Perhaps it was not the right thing to do. But in America we have so much freedom, it never struck me in that light. I think I'd better go off to Feltham by the next train." And Daisy looked inclined to cry.

"Nonsense! Why, my dear child, it's nearly ten o'clock, and you can't travel about by yourself at night. But I do wish you had telegraphed or something, and then I should have been ready with some plan."

"Isn't there anywhere I can go to?" asked Daisy piteously. "I'm so tired, Uncle Jack, and so hungry."

"Hungry! poor child! Well, I can remedy that." And Jack summoned Jones, and despatched that stolid worthy to the mess to order a nice little supper: "cold chicken or something of that sort and a small bottle of champagne, as quickly as possible."

Jack walked up and down the room, looking much disturbed and racking his brains for some plan as to what to do for this unexpected guest; and Daisy sat by the fire, saying nothing, but with her brown eyes full of unshed tears and a sadly pitiful expression. She did feel she had acted foolishly and impulsively, and was full of remorse.

In a very short time Jones returned with a most dainty little supper on a tray, and, setting it down on the table, asked: "Did you find a note from Major Allarton, sir?"

"Allarton!" cried Jack: "that's it! Eat your supper, Daisy, and don't move till I return. Just stay outside the door, Jones, and don't let a soul come in." And, seizing his cap, Jack tore out of the room, down the stairs and across the barrack square to a large house standing by itself near the gate. Hastily ringing the bell, he asked: "Is Mrs. Allarton at home, and will she see me?"

In a few seconds the servant returned, preceded by Major Allarton. "What's the matter, Jack?" said the latter. "Come in; my wife's in the drawing-room." And, without waiting for an answer to his

question, he ushered Jack into a cosy lamp-and-fire-lighted room, where a pleasing-looking lady, no longer very young, rose to greet him, kindly, but with evident surprise at so late a visit.

Hurriedly Jack told his tale and the predicament he was in.

"I don't know what to do, Mrs. Allarton, so I thought I'd come and ask your advice—it's awfully awkward."

"Bring her here. I will have the spare room made ready at once, and then in the morning we can consider what is best to be done."

"Oh, how good of you!" exclaimed the much-relieved Jack. "But I hardly like to take advantage of your kindness in that way—a girl you've never seen, and know nothing about."

"She's your niece, Jack," answered Major Allarton, "and I hope we're old enough friends to do each other a good turn without either feeling put out about it. Mrs. Allarton is right; bring her here at once."

Jack hurried back to his quarters and in a very short time reappeared at the hospitable Allartons' house with Daisy—the latter feeling very subdued and rather alarmed at the idea of being handed over to a strange lady. But as soon as she saw kind Mrs. Allarton and heard her pleasant, cheery voice making her welcome, all Daisy's fears evaporated and she was once more the bright and smiling girl Jack had found sitting by his fire. Mrs. Allarton looked approvingly at her pretty young guest in her neat dress and jacket of brown cloth trimmed with otter, with cap and muff to match—all very becoming to the fair young face and neat little figure.

"It is late, my dear, and you will be glad to get to bed, I'm sure, after your journey," said Mrs. Allarton, after they had all sat and talked for a little time, and Daisy had told again how she had come to look for "Uncle Jack."

"You'll come and see me in the morning, Uncle Jack?" asked Daisy as she said good-night; and then standing on tip-toe she rather shyly held up her sweet young face and kissed him. Jack Kerr blushed a fine red, and as Daisy and her hostess left the room, Major Allarton laughed and said: "Never mind, Jack, you'll get accustomed to it, in time. She's a very pretty girl. I shouldn't mind having her for a niece myself! Come and have a smoke." And he led the way to his den, where he and Jack were soon established in two easy-chairs with a tumbler a-piece beside them.

"Your niece has gone to bed, Captain Kerr, and is very happy and comfortable," said Mrs. Allarton, putting her head in at the door. "Good-night; come as early as you like in the morning."

Daisy awoke after a good night's rest, feeling as fresh as the traditional rose, and appeared at breakfast looking so like one that both Major and Mrs. Allarton lost their hearts to her. Her pleasant, unaffected manner, too, impressed them most favourably—and they both inwardly pronounced Jack's niece "a success."

"Fancy, this is my first breakfast in England!" she cried. "It

seems like a dream that I should be here—and oh ! how good of you to have me. I felt so frightened and miserable last night when Uncle Jack said he didn't know what to do with me, and now I'm so happy. But—I suppose I must go off to Feltham to-day," she added ruefully.

"No, no," answered kind Mrs. Allarton. "Now you are here you must not hurry away. Until your friends return to Feltham you need not think of going there."

"You're just in time for the ball to-night," added Major Allarton, with a smile.

"A ball ! Oh, *may* I go—do you think Uncle Jack will take me ?"

"If he won't, I will," said Mrs. Allarton, who could not suppress a smile at the girl's eager face. "But have you a dress ready ?"

"Yes ; such a nice new white frock ! But I want things : gloves, and shoes, a fan, and ——"

"I think Overbridge can supply all you need," laughed Mrs. Allarton. "And here comes your uncle."

Once more Daisy caused Jack some embarrassment by bestowing on him a shy kiss, and her face fell as he said :

"I must make some arrangement to relieve you of this young lady to-day, Mrs. Allarton. I think I had better take her to Feltham Park myself——"

"No, no, Captain Kerr ; now she is here, let her stay for a little. I am delighted to have her. And there is the ball to-night ; she will enjoy that."

"You're too good ! But I don't like ——"

"Oh ! Uncle Jack, *don't* send me away till after the ball !"

"Well, Daisy, as Mrs. Allarton is so kind ——"

Everything was soon settled. The Allartons had really taken a fancy to Daisy and were genuinely pleased to have her—and the girl was only too glad to stay with her new friends. Jack went off much relieved ; promising to return at twelve o'clock, after his morning duties had been performed, and take Daisy out shopping.

As they walked back to the Allartons' when shopping was over, they met some people on horseback. "Oh, how I should like a good gallop !" cried Daisy, looking after the riders longingly.

"Do you ride ? have you a habit ? If so, I'll take you for a turn this afternoon. One of my horses carries a lady."

"Oh ! how delightful ! There's nothing I like so much as a good ride," answered Daisy, eagerly. "I do think you're the very nicest uncle I ever heard of !"

Nothing could have been neater than Daisy in her habit, and her uncle felt a thrill of affectionate pleasure as they set off for a long ride together. "Really, Mary's girl is the jolliest little thing I've ever met, a charming niece, and one a fellow may be proud of," he thought. If there was one thing he was particular about it was how a lady looked on horseback, and Daisy satisfied his fastidious taste

in every respect. She sat well too, and seemed to be perfectly at home in the saddle. "I have ridden ever since I was a baby," she said.

Both Jack and Daisy thoroughly enjoyed their ride; a decorous trot till they had left the town behind them, and then a good stirring gallop over the open breezy downs; and as Jack lifted his niece off her horse at the Allartons' door she said: "I *am* having a good time, Uncle Jack. After all it *was* a happy thought of mine, coming to look you up." And Jack answered heartily: "Very glad you did, Daisy, though I fear I did not give you a very warm welcome at first; but 'all's well that ends well,' and, thanks to the Allartons, this has ended capitally."

If Daisy looked well in her habit, in her ball-dress of soft white tulle she looked quite radiant, and Mrs. Allarton was amused to see how all his brother-officers came and begged to be introduced to "Jack's niece." The story of her arrival had not leaked out, and Jack had only said his niece was "staying with the Allartons for the ball;" and as Captain Kerr and the Allartons were well-known to be great friends, this had occasioned no surprise.

"Hullo! Carr, back in time for the ball after all," said Jack to a tall, dark man, in the uniform of the 50th. "I thought you weren't coming till next week."

"Yes, I am back sooner than I expected, and feel rather out of it, knowing so few people. By Jove! What a pretty girl in white, talking to Mrs. Allarton; who is she?"

"That's my niece. Come and be introduced."

"She's very like someone I know—and I can't think who it is," said Captain Carr, looking puzzled. "What is her name?"

"Gaskell, Daisy Gaskell; her mother is my sister." And Jack, having by this time reached the end of the room where Mrs. Allarton and Daisy were standing, said to the latter:

"Daisy, I want to introduce Captain Carr of our regiment to you."

"Another Captain Carr," said Daisy, as she smiled and bowed. "Fancy two in the same regiment."

"Yes, but we don't spell it the same way," said the new-comer; "'KERR' and 'CARR.'"

"Oh, I see; but still it must be confusing sometimes."

"Can you give me a dance?" asked Captain Carr.

"Well—later on perhaps—but you see how full my card is," and she smilingly held up a card covered nearly to the end with initials and hieroglyphics.

"May I have this valse, No. 19, Miss Gaskell?"

Daisy looked up, surprised. "You may have the valse, if you're asking me, Captain Carr, but my name is not Gaskell."

"Not Gaskell? Why, I thought your uncle ——"

"No, no," she said, shaking her head and smiling. "I'm sure Uncle Jack never said that was my name ——"

"Then may I ask what it is?"

"Douglas, Daisy Douglas," she answered, as she moved away with a partner who had come to claim her.

"Douglas!" repeated Captain Carr, with a look of intense surprise. 'How very odd!' And catching sight of Jack Kerr at that moment, he went up to him and said:

"Look here, Kerr, why did you say your niece's name was Gaskell?"

"Because it is," replied Jack. "Who says it isn't?"

"She does."

"Good gracious! What can she mean? Why, my sister Mary married Archie Gaskell and went off with him to Australia, and last night that little girl turned up here and said she was my sister Mary's daughter. And now—what can she mean? It's some joke, Carr, depend upon it."

"I don't know what to think; but I don't believe it is a joke. She says her name is Douglas."

"Nonsense! If she's my sister Mary Gaskell's daughter, how *can* her name be Douglas?"

"Jack," said Captain Carr, "I believe there's some mistake. I have a sister Mary who is in America, and is Mrs. Douglas—and it's my belief this is *my* niece, not yours. The moment I saw her I was reminded of someone I knew, and now I've got the clue. She's the image of my sister Mary as I can remember her first when she married Douglas. They went to Australia directly after, and then to California, and I've heard from her at long intervals from America since then. She has one girl and two boys; and, by-the-way, I believe I'm god-father to one of the latter."

"Carr! Can it be possible? But I do believe you must be right! My sister married when I was quite a boy, and went to Australia, and I never heard she had gone to America till my niece—or—your niece—confound it! I'm getting awfully mixed—told me so last night; and your story tallies exactly with hers. She asked me if I didn't think her like mamma, and I must say nothing could be more *unlike* my recollection of my sister. But this is a go! Who is to tell her? It's very awkward, Carr——"

"Suppose we say nothing about it to-night, and get Mrs. Allarton to tell her to-morrow?"

"Yes, yes," cried Jack, much relieved. "But it *is* awkward! By the way, your name isn't Jack?"

"No, it isn't; but as Adolphus, the hideous name given me by my god-parents, was thought too long and ugly for home use, my people always called me 'Jack,' and I suppose Mary still continues to think of and call me by it. Presently I am to dance with your—no—*my* niece, and I will try to find out all I can from her, so as to be sure there is no mistake *this* time."

Jack Kerr was decidedly uncomfortable at the turn things had

taken. In even so short an acquaintance he had grown fond of the bright little girl who came so unexpectedly to claim him as a relation, and he feared the impending revelation would be anything but pleasant to her, and that it would cause much awkwardness. However, if kind Mrs. Allarton would undertake to tell Daisy of her mistake, it would relieve him of a very distasteful task.

Valse No. 19 arrived at last, and Captain Carr claimed his promised partner.

"Are you quite sure of my name now?" she asked with a smile.

"Yes, Miss Douglas. I don't think I shall make any more mistakes. Do you know you are very like a Mrs. Douglas I once knew. What is your father's name?"

"Charles—and my eldest brother is called after him. Number two is Jack, after my uncle—who is mother's only brother. But though he is always called Jack, and my brother had the same name given him, funnily enough, I believe my uncle's real name is Adolphus. But that is *too* dreadful—how would *you* like to have such a name?" and Daisy looked up at him smilingly.

"Not a pretty name, certainly," he answered; and added: "You have never seen your uncle before, I suppose?"

"No; I only arrived from America yesterday, and really I'm quite ashamed to tell you how I came and took Uncle Jack by storm. It was rather awkward, you see, because he did not know where to take me." And then she proceeded to give him an account of her adventures from the beginning; adding: "I can't say how kind dear Mrs. Allarton is. She has made me feel quite at home, and as if I had known her all my life. And Uncle Jack has been so good, and so generous! He gave me this lovely fan, my gloves, my bouquet, and oh, such a lovely necklet!"

Captain Carr smiled rather grimly. He could not but feel that these presents of Jack's would by-and-bye add terribly to poor Daisy's discomfort. From what she had told him he could not retain the vestige of a doubt that she was his niece instead of Jack's, and the question arose what was *he* to do with her on the morrow when all was disclosed.

"There's nothing for it but Aunt Adelaide," he thought—this venerable lady being the only available female relation to whom he could take Daisy till her friends at Feltham were ready to receive her. "I fear the poor little girl won't have a very merry time with her, but it would be very embarrassing for her here when she learns her mistake," he reflected.

Meanwhile Daisy, quite unconscious of the bomb-shell that was to explode upon her small head on the morrow, danced gaily, thoroughly enjoying what was really a very good ball. "Jack's niece" was very much admired, and he felt more and more uncomfortable as several of his brother-officers congratulated him on his relationship to so charming a young lady. At the beginning of the evening they had

danced together once or twice, but after his talk with Captain Carr, poor Jack had not ventured near Daisy. "I suppose I must call her Miss Douglas now," he thought. "Well, she's a dear little soul, and Carr is to be envied." Each time Daisy passed him she had a bright little nod and word for "Uncle Jack," till at last poor Jack, feeling sadly as if *he* were an impostor, could stand it no longer, but after a few words to Mrs. Allarton, saying he would like to see her alone in the morning, he slipped away to his own rooms.

"What can Captain Kerr have to say to me? I hope he does not really want to take Daisy off to Feltham," said Mrs. Allarton to her husband.

"I don't suppose it's anything very dreadful," he answered. "What a pretty girl she is, and dances like a fairy."

When, at a very early morning hour, Daisy bade "Good-night," or rather, "Good-morning," to Mrs. Allarton, she added: "I never, never enjoyed myself so much; but what became of Uncle Jack? I could not find him latterly, and did not see him dancing, and I wanted so much to say good-night, and to thank him for such a lovely day.—And oh! he does dance well—I would rather dance with him than with anyone."

Next morning Mrs. Allarton was surprised to see Jack and Captain Carr appearing together; the more so as the former had asked to see her alone, and the latter she only knew slightly, as he had been a good deal away from his regiment, on staff employment. But she liked what she did know of him, and greeted them both kindly, waiting to hear what they had to say.

"Mrs. Allarton," began Jack, "I asked to see you this morning, as something rather awkward has transpired. I had better tell you the story from the beginning. You know I have one sister, Mary——"

"Daisy's mother—yes—I know," murmured Mrs. Allarton.

Jack coloured and continued. "My sister is much older than I am, and married, when I was quite a boy, Archie Gaskell. They went to Australia, and for some time I heard occasionally from Mary, but gradually our correspondence ceased, and, having no other near relations, I have quite lost sight of her for years. I knew Mary had children, but was immensely surprised, as you know, when my—Daisy—appeared the other night, and told me she was my niece, the daughter of my sister Mary. It never occurred to me it could be a mistake——"

"Now it is my turn to speak," said Captain Carr. "I, too, have a sister Mary, and she married a mining engineer, Charles Douglas, and went first to Australia, then to America. I hear from her now and then, and, in one of her last letters, she said something about the possibility of her little girl coming to England to visit friends. When I saw your young guest at the ball last night, her likeness to someone I knew struck me at once. I asked Kerr who she was, and he told

me his niece, Miss Gaskell. Afterwards, when introduced to her, I addressed her by that name. She looked surprised, said there was some mistake, for her name was 'Douglas.' And the long and short of it is, we find she is *my* niece, not Jack's, and the similarity of names has led to the mistake."

"Well, this is too amusing!" exclaimed Mrs. Allarton, when she had heard all they both had to say. "But, after all, there is nothing very terrible in the mistake, only I fear it may make Daisy feel rather awkward at first. You had both better stay away till I tell her about it. Your niece is quite safe with me, Captain Carr, and I like her so much for her own sake that this makes no difference about her visit here. I shall be glad to have her as long as she can stay."

Some time later, Daisy having breakfasted and talked the ball over well with her hostess, the latter said:

"Now, my dear, prepare for a great surprise," and then proceeded to inform her of the mistake she had made.

Poor Daisy! As the truth dawned upon her, the colour first rushed in a perfect flood to her cheeks, and then faded away as suddenly, and she exclaimed in a voice of misery:

"Oh, dear, Mrs. Allarton, what *have* I done? How could I make such a dreadful mistake? *Not* my Uncle Jack—and—I've—I've—*kissed* him—oh!—and taken his presents—and—oh! dear, I shall die of shame. What must he think of me?" And, bursting into a flood of tears, she buried her burning cheeks in the sofa cushions, while a perfect storm of sobs shook her slight frame.

Mrs. Allarton tried in vain to soothe the poor girl.

"I can never, never see him again," she sobbed. "Oh! let me go away at once, please, dear Mrs. Allarton. I don't want to see either of them again. Oh! what would mamma say?"

Finally, Mrs. Allarton sent a note to Captain Carr, asking him to call. When he came, she told him how terribly upset Daisy was.

"I have written to my aunt, Mrs. Barton," he said, "asking her to receive Daisy, her great-niece, for a few days, and begged her to telegraph a reply. As soon as I hear from her, if her answer is in the affirmative, which I have no doubt it will be, I will take Daisy to her at Chester, till she can go to her friends, the Denes. Will you please tell her this, and I will let you know as soon as my aunt's answer comes?"

Thus it was settled. Mrs. Allarton felt there was no use pressing Daisy to prolong her visit under the circumstances; and next morning, a favourable answer to Captain Carr's letter to Mrs. Barton having been received, she left Overbridge with her real uncle.

"Good-bye, my dear, and I hope by-and-bye we shall see you again. Don't be too unhappy about a very natural and innocent mistake. You will laugh about it some day, I've no doubt," and Mrs. Allarton smiled as she kissed her departing guest.

"Oh, Mrs. Allarton, I can never see *him* again. He must think me

such a terribly bold, forward girl. Good-bye ; good-bye, and thank you a thousand times." And Daisy gave a very watery smile of farewell to her kind and hospitable friend.

She felt shy and uncomfortable with the real uncle. Somehow he was much more formidable than Captain Kerr. He was older and graver, and the thought of her awkward mistake had quite subdued poor Daisy ; but her uncle was very kind, and made her as comfortable as he could on the journey, though he talked little. As they neared Chester he said :

"Daisy, I have told Aunt Adelaide nothing except that you have come over from America to visit some friends, that owing to illness in the family they are unable to receive you for a few days, and that you've stayed with friends of mine till I knew she could have you. So you need say nothing about this misunderstanding."

"Thank you, uncle." And then, with a half-sob, she added : "May I call you Uncle Adolphus, please?"

"I thought you objected to the name," he said, laughing. "But you can call me what you like. I suppose you've heard of your great-aunt Adelaide?"

"Yes ; mamma has talked of her, and said she was very old and rather cross, but that she supposed I should have to go and see her before I left England."

In due time Captain Carr and Daisy arrived at Mrs. Barton's abode—and received a rather frosty welcome. The old lady did not like girls, she said, but her nephew was a favourite, and as Daisy came with him, Aunt Adelaide was less chilling than she might otherwise have been.

"Fancy Mary letting you come all the way from America by yourself," she said. "There's no knowing what mischief you might have got into on the way."

Daisy blushed crimson, and could barely falter that Mr. and Mrs. Carter, American friends, had brought her over.

Having seen his niece settled at Mrs. Barton's, Captain Carr returned to Overbridge, feeling it first incumbent on him to say "a word in season." "Let this be a lesson to you, Daisy, not to act on impulse. It *might* have been no end awkward, but Jack Kerr is a thorough good sort, and will never say a word about your mistake to anyone. Good-bye ; write and tell me when you hear from the Denes."

Certainly life at Aunt Adelaide's was not exciting. Daisy spent a dreary fortnight with her, and then came a letter from her friend Alice, saying that Mr. Dene's father had, after all, recovered from his dangerous illness, and was well enough for them to leave him, and that she anxiously expected Daisy at Feltham Park. So, bidding Mrs. Barton farewell, Daisy left Chester without any great regret. She had written to her mother a full account of her unhappy mistake, but felt it was unnecessary to tell anyone else.

Several weeks passed very pleasantly at Feltham. Alice Dene and Daisy had many things to talk of, old jokes to laugh over, old friends to discuss. Once or twice Daisy felt half tempted to tell her friend of her dreadful mistake at Overbridge, but her courage always failed. The memory of it still made her feel miserable, and even in the privacy of her own room brought hot blushes to her cheeks. Mrs. Dene was delighted to have an opportunity of showing her new home to an old friend, and they rode and drove about together, and, as the neighbourhood was a sociable one, there were luncheon and dinner-parties to vary the monotony. There was also the County Ball to look forward to, when all the houses round would be filled for the occasion. Mrs. Dene had collected a large and merry party of "young men and maidens," and felt that her pretty friend would certainly be one of the belles of the ball.

When the night of the ball arrived, Daisy could not bring herself to wear again the white dress she had worn at Overbridge—it would be too painful, she felt; so she chose a very pale pink, which was almost equally becoming. In a very short time after entering the ball-room her card was nearly filled; the men of the house-party all begged for dances, and Daisy was feeling most bright and happy, when suddenly she saw a sight that covered her face with blushes, and almost brought tears to her eyes.

It was only a tall, good-looking, soldierly young man, but her confusion was great as she recognised "Uncle Jack"—no—"Captain Kerr." She hurriedly looked for Mrs. Dene to beg to be allowed to go home—a sudden "headache," any plea would do, by which she might effect her escape; but nowhere could she see Alice. She felt miserable, wretched, wished the floor would open and swallow her. "I hope he won't see me," she thought—but at that moment Jack Kerr turned and saw her. A bright smile of recognition lighted up his pleasant face, and, before she could escape, Captain Kerr stood in front of her.

"May I have a dance?" he asked, and without waiting for an answer, took her card and wrote in the first vacant space one word—"Jack"—then bowed and moved on.

Daisy felt that now escape was impossible. She danced each dance, but as the one for which "Jack" had written his name approached, she became more and more silent and nervous, till her partners wondered why Miss Douglas was so absent and pre-occupied.

When Captain Kerr's dance began, he silently offered her his arm. They joined at once the throng of valisers, and Daisy could not help enjoying the real pleasure of a good valse to charming music with a partner whose step suited hers perfectly. At the close of the dance Jack led her into a conservatory.

"Now let us have a talk," he said. First he asked her to tell him all she had been doing since they met, then gave her news of the Allartons, etc. Jack talked so naturally and calmly, that Daisy's

shyness soon melted, and she found herself chattering away to him as happily as if the miserable mistake which had caused her such unhappiness had never occurred. As he bade her good-night, later on, he said :

"I am going to stay for some time in this neighbourhood. Will you introduce me to Mrs. Dene ; I want to ask her permission to call."

"Pray do come," Mrs. Dene answered to his request. The handsome, pleasant-mannered young man impressed her favourably at once.

Jack Kerr spent a fortnight in the neighbourhood of Feltham, and scarcely a day passed that he did not appear there on some excuse or other. Frank Dene and he found many tastes in common, and several mutual acquaintances, and he was always welcome. Daisy grew, unconsciously, to look eagerly for his coming, and to feel the day dull indeed when he did not appear.

"This is my last day," he said, as they walked together in the garden. Daisy was out gathering snowdrops when he arrived, and he had asked Mrs. Dene if he might go and find her. "Do you know why I came, Daisy?"—Then seeing her downcast blushing face he continued : "At first I felt very sorry to find out our mistake, but I soon became glad to think you were really not my niece. Do you know why, Daisy?"

She shook her head. "Please don't talk of that dreadful mistake —"

"I was glad, dear, because I felt I wanted you to be something nearer and dearer than a niece. Do you think, Daisy, you can care for me enough to be my little wife?"

Another half-hour in the garden ; then Jack said :

"Good-bye, Daisy, I must go back to Overbridge. Shall I give your love to Mrs. Allarton?"

"Yes, please."

"And I can tell her I'm going to marry "Jack's niece!"



"ABSENT FRIENDS!"

Cher Fules, across the "silver streak,"

Keeping your "Jour de l'an" to-day;
Mes vœux to thee—I kiss thy cheek—

"Shek 'ands!" Champagne! "A ta santé!"

We've drowned old hates in many loves

Parisian, dainty, mocking, gay!

Bonbons, and operas-bouffes and gloves—

Jules, au revoir! we'll meet in May!

Du lieber Hans! I pledge thee here,

Thou, and thy thrice belovèd Rhine!

Whose vineyards fed, one happy year,

This thin-necked flask of amber wine—

All blessings on its pleasant strand,

All blessings on its laden vine—

Auf wiedersehn, lieb' Vaterland!

Long be such draughts, Hans, mine and thine!

Amico mio! o'er the Alps

I wave a hand, a kiss I blow!

We arch our eyebrows to our scalps,

Respect, esteem, delight to show!

Your red Chianti brims my glass

With more good wishes than I know

How to express; so, by the Mass,

A Rivederci, Giulio!

To lands beyond Atlantic seas

My fancy wings a further flight—

I'll dance the "German," an' you please,

With Cousin Sam on New Year's night!

We're kith and kin—Your best of health!

Rum Punch? No, really?—Wal' you might!

Why, cert'nly—Good luck, great wealth,

All happiness! in honour bright.

Once more I shake you by the hand

Whate'er your country, race, degree—

Good fellows all of every land—

All absent friends, all ships at sea,

God bless you! As the years increase

May all fair things your guerdon be;

Good-will of men, Heaven's gift of peace—

And sometimes, friends, remember me!

G. B. STUART.



W. SMALL.

"PANET! WHAT IS IT? ARE YOU HURT? WHO IS THIS MAN?"

R. TAYLOR.